

# **TOWARD EXCELLENCE**

**Edited by  
N M SINGHVI**

**RBSA Publishers, Jaipur**

## THE BOOK

Higher education is a vital instrument to carve the statue of our nation. This instrument must be so sharpened as to cut across excellently. 'Toward Excellence' must be the pivot of all our educational reforms. This book, though a compilation of the views of academicians, thinkers and pillars of society, provides an insight into the measures for educational reforms specially for achieving excellence in education.

### *Contributors :*

Kuldip Nayar, Mangal Bihari, K.C. Kulish, T.N. Chaturvedi, Komal Kothari, G.C. Singhvi, K.L. Kamal, N.M. Singhvi, P.N. Muthiah, Pawan Surana, Ramesh Arora, Pawan Gupta, Usha Pawan

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N. M. SINGHVI

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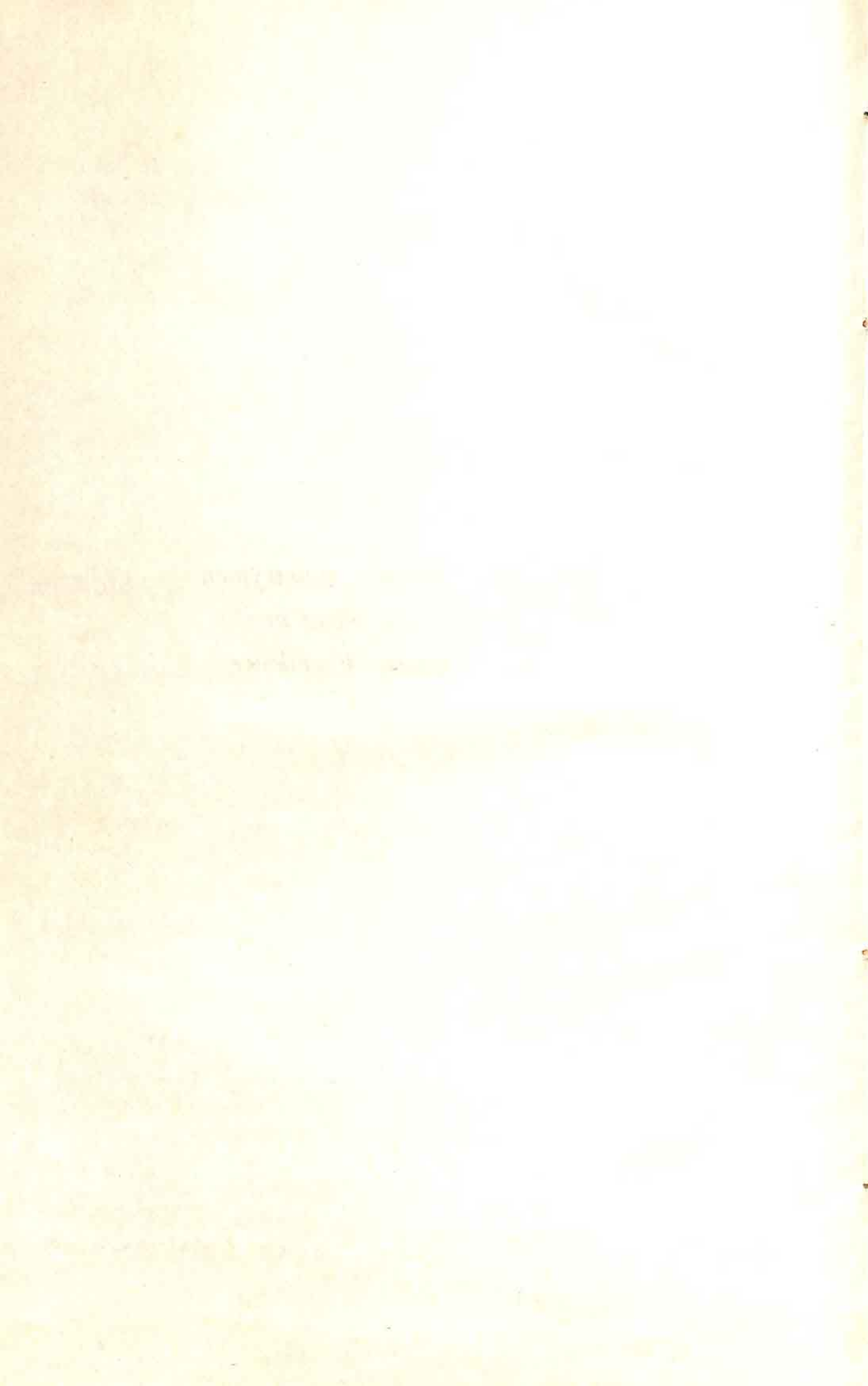
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*To my fellow countrymen  
who only can move our  
nation Toward Excellence*



## Preface

Being a democratic country that has opted for the socialistic pattern of society, India faces a challenging task today to propagate new values through education. According to a recent policy statement on education, "our country has reached a stage in its economic and technical development when a major effort must be made to derive the maximum benefit from the assets already created and to ensure that the fruits of change reach all sections. Education is the highway to that goal." This calls for the reorganisation of our system of education, specially higher education. The first task is to create an environment conducive to adaptability for change.

Much is spoken about higher education at academic meetings, but opinions expressed by educationists and others at such sessions are all forgotten with the passage of time. It is thus my humble endeavour to keep on record some opinions of select persons so that they may survive the ravages of time, while, at the same time, serving guidelines for the desired changes in the field of education in the Indian context.

This book is an attempt to locate the weaknesses of the present day education system in our country keeping in view the changing social and economic patterns and other suggestions for a sound system to meet the challenges of the day.

I gratefully acknowledge my indebtedness to Mr Kuldip Nayar, Mr. Mangal Bihari, Mr. G. C. Singhvi, Mr. K. C. Kulish,

Mr. T. N. Chaturvedi, Mr. Komal Kothari, Mr. P. D. Sharma, Mr. K. L. Kamal, Mr. P. N. Muthiah, Mrs. Pawan Surana, Mr. Ramesh K. Arora, Mr. Pawan K. Gupta and Mrs. Usha Pawan for contributing their valuable articles to this compendium on higher education. I am also grateful to Mr. Surendra Parnami, and Mr. Raj Kumar Parnami of R B S A Publishers, for their help.

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# Contents

|   |      |
|---|------|
| <i>Preface</i>  | vii  |
| <i>Contributors</i>   | ix   |
| <i>Introduction</i>   | xiii |
| 1. The Role of Colleges and Universities in Nation-Building       | 1    |
| 2. The Aims of Education  | 7    |
| 3. Some Higher Education Fallacies                                | 15   |
| 4. Vedic Education  | 29   |
| 5. New Education Policy-Hopes & Fears                             | 37   |
| 6. Our Present System of Education : Its Relevance and Its Impact | 55   |
| 7. Women's Education in India : Some Basic Issues                 | 65   |
| 8. New Education, New Technology & New Social Order               | 77   |
| 9. Quality in Higher Education                                    | 85   |
| 10. Perspectives of Foreign Language Teaching in India            | 93   |
| 11. Random Thoughts on Higher Education and its Problems          | 105  |
| 12. Role Efficacy of University Teachers                          | 117  |
| 13. National Policy on Education and Libraries                    | 125  |
| <i>Index</i>  | 143  |





## Introduction

Confucius has said, "Lead the people by laws and regulate them by penalties and the people will try to keep out of jail but will have no sense of shame. Lead the people by virtue and restrain them by the rule of decorum, and the people have the sense of shame, and moreover will become good." This emphasises the role of colleges and universities in character-building. It is universally believed that one who opens an educational institution closes a prison. But if we examine the situation in the light of this statement, we will find that our colleges and universities today are far from fulfilling this goal.

### THE ROLE OF COLLEGES IN NATION--BUILDING

Mr. Kuldip Nayar in his article has made an attempt to locate the weaknesses of the present-day educational institutions in the country and indirectly the present-day system of education. He points out that there is an over emphasis on marks and hence higher education has become a machine through which students are processed for degrees. Ever decreasing academic standards, swelling enrolment, ill-equipped libraries, listless-teaching methods, ill-informed teachers, burdened by financial worries are some of the basic problems which need the careful attention of educationists and the authorities. Besides these, there are other weaknesses such as the atmosphere of distrust, the cynicism about administrative authorities, and the bureaucratic structures of the colleges and universities, all of which have had a depressing effect on the morale of the teachers.

Mr. Nayar has suggested that there should be, atleast, a few institutions where we could have the best of teachers. He is in favour of inducting student's representatives in the decision making bodies of institutions of higher learning.

## THE AIMS OF EDUCATION

Socrates believed, "The aim of education is to dispel error and to discover truth." Indeed any kind of education worth the name liberates an individual from the bonds of ignorance. "सा विद्या या विमुक्तये" has rightly been proclaimed by the Upanishadas. In the modern context education is a vital instrument of social change and so it should, rather it must, liberate the intellect so as to enable one to readily accept the changes.

Mr. Mangal Behari feels that education must liberate the mind from dogmas, geo-sentiments and socio-sentiments, and prepare it to face all the challenges of the present and future. He further emphasises that education must foster value system in the individuals. He is in favour of giving autonomy to the educational institutions. The most important function of higher education, he says, is to serve as the most powerful medium of social change and scientific discoveries, and to awaken awareness to understand the world properly. He has advised teachers to free themselves from dogmas and to become enlightened in order to become the harbingers of social change.

## FALLACIES OF EDUCATION

In fact, education, specially higher education, is a great weapon against the evil forces of national disintegration. The need is, therefore, to free education from fallacies and reorganise the system with clear-cut objectives.

Mr. G.C. Singhvi, in his discourse, has projected some of the fallacies of higher education. He is of the opinion that holding of doctoral degrees does not guarantee the making of better teachers. He suggests that there should be two separate courses—one for those who wish to go in for teaching and the other for those who wish to persue research. He recommends the creation of a post of Registrar General of Libraries to solve the problem of standard books in the libraries. The Registrar General of Libraries



will issue instructions and guidelines for the maintenance and running of libraries.

As for the fallacies regarding women-education, he has suggested separate courses for housewives and careerists.

Mr. Singhvi feels that it is fallacious, rather erroneous, to believe that two years morning or evening diploma courses in foreign languages could adequately make the students proficient in these languages. At least a five-year part-time course in a foreign language is required to provide the learner with proficiency in that language.

He regards it a great waste of national wealth to have centres for post-graduate studies and research for every discipline in every college. To minimise the expenditure, he suggests that each one of these classes should be held at one location in a state.

He also points out that we have miserably failed to make a tangible distinction between professional and academic studies in law. He is in favour of making studies in law purely academic.

## BASIS OF EDUCATION

Now the question arises what should be the basis of higher education in our country. Mr. K.C. Kulish pleads that Vedic knowledge should be made the basis of our education. Only then can we hope to reach our destination because the Vedas are the perennial source of all what man wants to know. The principles propounded in the Vedas are unchallengeable and irrevocable.

Mr. Kulish has highlighted in brief but clear outlines all the main issues related to education. It has been his endeavour to present, as far as possible, a seasoned faith which deals justly with Vedic lore and learning. Mr. Kulish does not make any pretensions to learning, but, on the contrary, makes an attempt to restate old truths in a way which may be helpful in disabusing the minds of the people of wrong notions about Vedic learning and also in removing misconceptions about the Vedas.

## HOPES AND FEARS

Education is a continuum; is an ever growing process. It has continued to evolve in this country, as elsewhere in the world,

and extend its reach and coverage, as a result of which our New Education Policy has come into existence since January, 1986. This policy holds forth hopes as well as fears. Mr. T N. Chaturvedi has tried to sum up some of the hopes and fears in his article. He is of the opinion that education is a powerful instrument of change and hence it should be closely linked with our social vision. Education, according to him, must be turned into real investment. He further believes that it is, through education alone, that equality, equity and quality can be achieved. He has stressed on value orientation also.

### INTER-DISCIPLINARY RESEARCH

Tagore writes, "Wisdom does not attain completeness, except through the living, and discipline divorced from wisdom, is not true discipline, but merely the meaningless following of custom, which is only a disguise for stupidity." This applies to our present system of education, specially to research in various disciplines. All the disciplines are like inviolable states. Mr. Komal Kothari has described the utility of modern research. He lays the emphasis on inter-disciplinary researches. He is against the existing narrow departmental pattern of research which he feels is incapable of giving any new dimension to the education system.

He has evolved a method of research which is purely his own and which departs from the traditional methods. He describes his experiences and stresses that the aim of research must not be merely to give a descriptive analysis of the subject but must be something more serious. Indirectly he has drawn our attention to the weakness of our present-day education system. To him that education is good which can arouse in an individual a fierce desire to dig out the lost elements of his national culture and can make one realise that he is part of the atmosphere, environment and culture of his land.

### WOMEN'S EDUCATION

Women are men's equal in every walk of life and hence they cannot be denied the right to education. Education is to be used as an agent of basic change in the status of women. It is to play a positive, interventionist role in the endorsement of women.



It should foster the development of new values. Prof. P.D. Sharma does not seem to be quite happy with the existing system of higher education for women. It has, as he thinks, failed to produce either the right kind of career-women or the ideal type of house wives. He maintains that there must be separate curriculum for various types of categories of women, such as—career women, housewives, etc. Mr. G.C. Singhvi is also of the same views. Prof. Sharma agrees with the goals of our new-education policy when he says that there must be no discrimination on the basis of sex in vocational and professional courses if women wish to adopt some profession and not merely waste scarce economic resources by becoming only housewives after studies.

#### **DISTANCE EDUCATION**

Education cannot be confined to the four walls of colleges and universities. It is the traditional elitist concept that education can be imparted only by formal agencies. This concept is being found inadequate to meet the challenges arising out of the changing social, political and economic order. Prof. K.L. Kamal holds the view that correspondence instruction or distance education can prove of great value in meeting this challenge. He has cited examples of this type of education in developing countries and briefly given a description of the concept of open-university. He has dwelt on the use of new educational technology for the purpose of providing education through correspondence.

#### **QUALITY IN EDUCATION**

Dr. P.N. Muthiah has defined in clear terms the standard of education in terms of integrated personality development; contribution of education to economic growth, social development and cultural renaissance. There are three dimensions of the standard, namely (a) adequacy of curriculum (b) dynamism and (c) comparability of educational systems.

He has attempted to identify the quality of the teachers, learners, learning material and the quality of administration. He has suggested remedial measures. According to him, a thorough training of teachers, fostering of new principles of teaching techniques, and over-hauling of educational administration are some of the imperatives for enhancing the quality.

## FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

The German Scholar Goethe rightly remarked : "He who knows no foreign language knows nothing of his own." This statement emphasises the role of foreign languages in expanding the mental horizon of an individual and opening a dialogue between two different cultures. Learning of a foreign language not only opens a new window of knowledge but it also provides better professional opportunities as well.

Mrs. Pawan Surana has stated the reasons for learning a foreign language. She feels that foreign language must be taught in India to open up new job avenues, new opportunities for higher studies and for the acquisition of prestigious academic status.

She has made suggestions for improving and modifying the courses of foreign language teaching. Uniformity in the courses, inter-disciplinary projects, relating these courses to national relevance, imparting of the knowledge of socio-political and cultural back-ground, introducing advance courses, imparting the learners practical training of the courses, restricting highly specialized courses according to the future needs of the nation, exploring the possibility of teaching foreign languages through distant education, introducing the teaching of important foreign languages at the school level, setting up of independent departments in universities for the foreign languages and the starting of training programmes for foreign language teachers, are some of the valuable suggestions put forth by her.

She has suggested the following points for strengthening and making proper utilization of foreign language teaching. Dictionary-project, translation cell, project of comparative studies of foreign languages and mother tongues, establishment of a department of comparative literatures, central library of foreign languages, specific research projects on the cultures and civilizations of foreign countries, documentation cell, national coordination committees of scholars of different languages, national seminars and symposiums for the teachers of foreign languages, and internal evaluation.

## STATUS OF TEACHER

Society expects much from a teacher. He is called the nation builder or the torch-bearer. He is supposed to be above all



other professionals. It is a truism that the status of the teacher reflects the socio-cultural ethos of a society, and as per our new education policy no people can rise above the level of its teachers. If this is true the teachers must be efficient and effective. Prof. Ramesh K. Arora has tried to enumerate factors influencing the efficiency of the university teachers. They are always constrained by environmental settings and institutional and individual problems. He has suggested some ways for improving their efficacy. Effective feedback, self-appraisal, continuing education, linkage with community and self regulation are some such suggestions.

## LIBRARIES

The draft 'National Policy on Education-1986' has reiterated the goals of education. It states—"Education has an acculturating role. It refines sensitivities and perceptions that contribute to the national cohesion, a scientific temper and independence of mind and spirit—thus furthering the goals of socialism, secularism and democracy enshrined in our constitution." Mr. Pawan K. Gupta and Mrs. Usha Pawan review the national policy on education and the role of libraries in achieving the goals of education. They give a brief history of libraries in India and discuss their future.

It would be advisable for the policy makers to take into account these recommendations while finally shaping our national policy on education.





# The Role of Colleges and Universities in Nation - Building

KULDIP NAYAR

A few years ago I served as Chairman of a leading women's college in Delhi. If I were to relate my experience regarding higher education that the college imparted, I would mention two things which occupied me during my three-year tenure. One was the unmanageable number of students who got admission and the other was the poor quality of teachers.

On admissions the Chairman had no control. The criterion for selection was marks; if a student had secured high marks she could not be rejected. In the absence of any other method, probably this one was the best. Nonetheless, I wondered how loaded the system was in favour of the upper class which had access to good schools, which could even afford extra coaching and hence secure high grade.

My criticism of higher education then was—and it has not changed even today—that there was an over-emphasis on marks. The Education Commission (1964-66) pointed out the same thing. The obsession with marks has not decreased since, either with students or teachers. If the purpose of higher education is "to sharpen man's understanding of the universe and himself"—an ideal before universities—I do not think that marks should play such a role in life as they do in our country.

When I studied abroad, after having earned degrees of B.A. (Hons.) and LL.B., I found that the emphasis there was on weekly assignments, not only of written papers but also of portions of reading from particular books and journals. True, the grading of paper one submitted was there but it was the knowledge one had imbibed and had shown during discussions and seminars that weighed.

In fact, higher education in our country has come to be a machine through which students are processed for degrees, which do not generally have the stamp of learning. But then mass scale production seldom has. Since the purpose of higher education has deteriorated to the grabbing of job it is not surprising to find that even the pretension of knowledge is disappearing year after year.

The unpleasant fact cannot, however, be ignored that with swelling enrolments in colleges, there has been a fall in academic standards. Considering that our standards of higher education were never very high, the present decline constitutes a major crisis in higher education. But it may not be correct to attribute the malady to mere swelling enrolment.

At the same time it would be wrong to suppose that the students that come today from high school are incapable of responding to the challenges of genuine learning. The fact seems to be that there are few in the colleges who are able to offer these challenges, or to assist the students in responding to them. On the other hand, many students now come from comparatively or entirely uneducated homes and are ill-prepared at the secondary level to undertake genuine university work; they have little experience of independent study; their curiosity is unquickened and learning for them is mainly a matter of mechanical memorisation. There is, it as a rule, little discussion of intellectual matters with their teachers or fellow students and their main duty is considered to be to attend to uninteresting lectures usually given in a language which they understand inadequately.

When the medium is an Indian language, there is a dearth of suitable text-books and supplementary literature necessary to achieve competence in their subjects. Many of them cannot be expected to read text-books in English because it has not become for them the language of learning.



Of course, the women college over which I presided was even worse because it served a platform to girls who waited till suitable alliance was available for marriage. And I wonder, with due apologies to women lib protagonists, whether most girls who join colleges have any other purpose in doing so except making themselves more eligible.

If one were to conduct studies one would find that the majority of girls who have earned degrees in medicine, law or accountancy, have not pursued careers after marriage. Should limited opportunities in such fields, as we have, be frittered away?

As regards teachers, my experience shows that very few, among them deserved to be in colleges. They were nice, faithful, but did not have the competence required. Every year India produces some 8,000 new teachers for colleges. We do not have even scholars of distinction in that quantity. Therefore, failure of higher education is not only that of students but of teaching community as well.

The late Raj Krishna, professor in the Delhi School of Economics, used to say that teachers should sell admission tickets to students for lecture and not charge monthly fees, that would force teachers to prepare their lecture. He was right but the country has not produced many teachers like him. In fact, a good teacher does not have to bother about the attendance of students because they look forward to his lecture.

In many of the weaker colleges, a majority of teachers teach mechanically and listlessly. The subjects in which they lecture do not often involve their intellectual passion. They do not usually have a part in the formulation of the syllabus which they are required to teach, nor do they make—with a few bright exceptions—experiments in methods of teaching. There is little enthusiasm for learning or discovery of new truths because research is not considered an integral part of their duties and whatever research is done is usually of unconvincing quality. In the absence of a "non-research" atmosphere, even the intellectually ambitious younger members of the staff are soon caught up in the general atmosphere of indifference or cynicism.

A large proportion of teachers suffer from financial worries, particularly in colleges where the salary grades are low, and are often unable to buy any books or journals. Even the physical

conditions of work discourage serious, undistracted study or intellectual dialogue with their colleagues. Usually, there is one staff common room which is not large enough even to accommodate all the members of the faculty. In some of the institutions there are many other factors which are un-congenial for the development of intellectual vitality.

And the hierarchical concentration of authority within the departments and colleges, the atmosphere of distrust between senior and junior teachers, the cynicism about administrative authorities, the unseemly conflicts about offices and positions and the attitude of envy towards persons of superior attainments have contributed to the deadening of the spirit of intellectual curiosity and adventure. Some of the members are diverted from intellectual concern into intrigue and conflict over the small administrative or financial prizes afforded by Indian academic life. Others swim in the sea of indifference.

On top of all this, the bureaucratic structure within which research has to be done, the dependence on the approval of indifferent superiors, the elaborate procedures through which equipment made abroad has to be obtained, the difficulties in the maintenance and repair of equipment once obtained and in establishing contact with researchers working on related subjects, have all had a depressing effect on the morale of teachers and on the quality and quantity of their research output.

I wish we could have at least a few institutions where we could collect the best of teachers so that there would be some places of learning in India which could be compared with the best abroad. In this way the really gifted and promising students would not have to go to Cambridge, Oxford or Harvard for post-graduate courses or research training. Indeed, the ancient universities in India were leading centres of learning in the world and attracted scholars and students from other countries. But unfortunately these traditions did not survive and the modern universities were established 'in imitation of the London University as it then was.

One step which I introduced during my tenure of chairmanship was the induction of the college students' union president into the college governing body. Lots of eyebrows were raised at this but my argument was that apart from the appointment and promotion of teachers, students were concerned with what happened



at the campus and therefore they should be associated with the college activities. The Gajendergadkar Committee report commends the wisdom of student participation in decision-making in colleges.

Student participation in decision making could come about for one of two reasons. One is that since students are at the receiving end of the educator's exertions, their reactions are relevant in any programme of improving the quality of education. The other reason is that decision-makers are so afraid of the students' rabble that their participation in decision-making could be a form of orderly surrender. Decision-making, however, is only a means to an end. The end is to promote the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge and, ultimately, the improvement of the quality of life.

Ultimately, it is a university to which colleges are affiliated has to be responsible for guidance in the field of higher education. At present, universities are unnecessarily involved in such things as conducting examinations and selecting invigilators; some autonomous boards should do so as is the case with examinations at school level. The university and its role in national life was summed up by Jawaharlal Nehru in his convocation address to the Allahabad University in 1947 thus: "A university stands for humanism, for tolerance, for reason, for the adventure of ideas and for the search of truth. It stands for the onward march of the human race towards even higher objectives. If the universities discharge their duties adequately, then it is well with the nation and the people."

These noble words highlight the basic truth that universities have a crucial part to play in the life, welfare and strength of a nation. They can fill this role only if they owe uncompromising loyalty to certain fundamental values of life. What it totals to is essentially a community of teachers and students where, in some way, all learn from one another or, at any rate, strive to do so.





# The Aims of Education

MANGAL BIHARI

Higher education should aim at the liberation of the intellect. Normally the intellect is beset with dogma and many acquired propensities. Every dogma has a blinding effect. It restricts clear perception as well as creativity. It weighs on the mind like a dead weight. Dogmas are of many kinds. Most powerful are religious dogmas. They lead one to think that all wisdom is contained in a particular book or set of books. The mind is made to rotate round the words a verses of those books for light on every subject. Scholars stretch the meanings of these books with ingenuity and imagination. Even so, they stand like walls in the path of extention of understanding. Other religious dogmas make you believe that some historical or mythical personalities are the last word in human development. This also restricts intellectual growth a proper development of personality. There are many other ways in which religious dogmas restrain the expansion of psychological frontiers of humanity.

There are many "isms" in the modern world which generate geo-sentiments or socio-sentiments. These sentiments also stand as barriers against all round human growth. They misdirect the energies of men towards narrow aims. Geo-sentiment leads to nationalism, regionalism and area-consciousness. The Pan-Arab feeling is a geo-sentiment. Europe is divided between several nationalities, in spite of its tremendous scientific and technological

progress. They have a belligerent tendency towards each other and think of development and growth within particular geographical boundaries only. They serve to divide mankind within geographical boundaries. Geo-sentiment leads to geo-politics and geo-economics, all of them hamper national scientific growth.

The next is socio-sentiment. It is slightly more expansive than geo-sentiment but many more times harmful. In socio-sentiment, a person's mind is not attached to a particular territory, but to a particular community. One, then, thinks only in terms of social, economic and political interests of one's community, even if this hampers the growth of other communities or even destroys some of them. This also creates socio-religious, socio-economical and socio-political feelings. "Our God is the true God and we are the chosen people" thus thinks the religious bigot. For him all others are pagans. Such a father when asked about his daughter who has worried out of her faith, answers gruffly "She is dead". His affection and sympathies flow only in communal channels.

Motivated by socio-economic sentiment, one group exploits the land, people and wealth of other groups. This is the seed of imperialism. Today a small community of wealthy industrialists is creating "Satellite States" all over the world to obtain cheap new materials and labour and to create readily available markets for their manufactured goods. This group of international capitalists exercise their control through huge multinational corporations, many of which are more powerful than individual nations. In fact the sales of twelve largest multinationals is equal to the combined gross national product of two-third of the all nations of the world.

Developing countries, desperate for foreign capital and technology, open their doors and grant admission and incentives to these multinationals. They soon find their economies completely at the mercy of these global giants. They begin to dictate all the terms of trade and plunge them deep into debt. Although the world now produces more than twice as much foodgrains and proteins as the amount needed to feed the whole human race, yet every minute hundreds are dying of starvation. There are islands of luxury within a sea of stinking misery, disease, ignorance and despair. Hence socio-sentiments lead to economic, political and cultural exploitation. This is often of a very subtle nature and has to be fully grasped through better education.



Higher education should prepare our minds to face all the challenges of the present and future. As we know, social progress is essentially dilectical. There reigns a thesis in the world at any given time. It is the status quo. It supports the ruling ideas and the ruling clique. It suppresses all opposing values and alternative ideologies. The prevailing vested interests allow education to teach history, sociology, literature etc. in a way that the virtues of the dominating present are extolled at the cost of the rest. There is an invisible twist in the intellectual outlook which obstructs objectivity.

For instance, in the days of monarchies all theories used to support the divine origin of Kings and the idea that a King can do no wrong. There were prayers in educational institutions for the long life of the Monarch. History used to restrict itself to the story of the ruling dynasties. Poets were court poets and used to praise the Kings. Capital and trade used to support the Kingdom. Armies were loyal to them. Bravery was defined as the intensity of this loyalty.

Then things changed and oligarchies and barons and *Jagirdars* and *Zamidars* ruled the show and the whole system supported them. Thereafter came democracies and all began to sing in praise of the rule of the people, by the people and for the people. Even dictatorships had to live disguised as People's democracies. We are still in the same age. It looks sacriligious to think of any alternative system other than democracy. Capitalism and democracy have become handmaids and professional political careers have made a mockery of the system of the free elections. People have become entirely helpless spectators of their own name. Yet any one venturing to talk against democracy is regarded as either a fool or a knave.

But in the bosom of every 'thesis' an anti thesis goes on brewing and smoldering. Under the weight of its own imperfections and onesidedness the thesis decays and becomes too weak to fight the anti-thesis, which gradually becomes victorious. Through the conflict between thesis and antithesis a new mixture of values gets recognised and becomes widely acceptable. This is the synthesis which becomes the new thesis and gradually becomes the new fashion and ruling goddess.

The pace of change in ancient times was slow. It used to take hundreds of years for a thesis to give way to a new synthesis. But with the growth of technology, communication systems, now an anti-thesis matures much quickly and the value systems change in decades rather than centuries. History also, now progresses on jet propulsion.

The task of higher education is to prepare one for the values which will come into being tomorrow. This is the only way to avoid archaism and decadance. Higher education, should, therefore, fully explain and open one's mind to the antithesis. It should, in effect, support the antithesis. It should prepare rebels of the status quo. It should unleash the forces of change.

But this is only possible when universities are free from the influence of the Government of the day. All governments are conservative. Even a revolutionary regime is conservative in the sense that it wants to perpetuate the revolution and avoids counter revolution or further revolt. Therefore, the educationists should independently decide which courses to be taught and in what manner. The academicians should not be politicians in disguise, nor men supported by them. Otherwise, political interference will be lodged within the universities like Trojan horses.

This is true of not only social sciences, but also of natural sciences. Teachers who are educated today and do not keep themselves abreast with the quick pace of the growth of science, oppose proposals for amendment of the curriculum for selfish reasons. They do not want to appear out of date and do not wish to occupy back seats in academic assemblies. They, therefore, keep education behind times. This is supporting the 'thesis' in science, while more and more approximations of truth are arriving every day. Today the capitalists and the war mongers are organising the change, tomorrow the universities themselves should become the agent of change and the mothers of new discoveries. Scientific growth will then acquire a better direction for the overall welfare of mankind as opposed to the avaricious interests of imperialists or capitalists only.

The most important function of higher education, therefore, is becoming the most powerful medium of social change and scientific discoveries for the welfare of human race. They should extend the frontiers of knowledge not for profit or more power but for all-round welfare. The combination of liberated intellect, with a



futuristic approach will make educational institutions real temples for all human beings irrespective of their race, colour, nationality or economic and political status.

Another purpose of education is to awaken awareness to understand the world properly. It includes training of mind to achieve proper balance between the physical, psychic and spiritual aspects of life. When there is over emphasis on the physical, the human qualities begin to decline and life become crude and senseless. In the psychic arena improper development leads to subtle exploitation and cultural domination of one group over the other without the spiritual side developing alongwith the physical and the psychic, the world becomes tension ridden and full of hypocrisy. People talk of disarmament to prove their human qualities, but internally they are dedicated to the development of more deadly weapons. Peace is on their lips but war dominates their intentions. It is the task of education to understand and expose this duplicity. Minds should become strong enough not to be overpowered by the propoganda machines of the exploiters. This is not possible by general education alone. Education has to acquire new techniques to train the mind to rise above the world of senses and prejudices.

Human longings or aspirations are broadly of two types. Firstly those that are inborn and secondly those which are acquired or imposed. Inborn aspirations mostly concern physicality and basic functions of life. But acquired aspirations depend upon the culture of the society and the environment. People adopt the acquired longings without much thought or discrimination. Communalism, capitalism, communism etc are all acquired aspirations. The mass media imposes consumerism and many other longings. Mostly acquired longings are the result of narrow outlooks or selfish traditions. There is a basic existential force that supports life in a society. In order to materialise one's longings one uses force for action. Whenever, this mutative force is against the flow of the sentiment force there is conflict and disorder. In the individual this conflict leads to physical mental ailments and in society it leads to fissiparous tendencies and decay. Therefore the task of education is to reform the acquired longings of men so that the activating force of mankind flows parallel to the vital force or life force. This is only possible when one can detach oneself from the social environment and think independently. This freedom of thought is the highest gift of higher education.

One acquired attitude, particularly, is working in a dangerously suicidal manner. Man has started looking at nature and the animal world from the strictly utilitarian point of view. Scarce minerals, forests, rivers, mountains are being considered as resources to be exploited. Avaricious capitalists are converting these resources into wealth at a very rapid rate. This has affected the ecological balance of our planet. If we do not realise the existential value of nature, apart from its utilitarian value, very soon we shall invite doom and not progress. Similarly we are exploiting the animal world so recklessly that many species have become extinct and others are on the verge of becoming extinct. Education has to teach that the human, animal and the vegetation world constitutes an organic whole and we cannot prosper at the expense of others. The meaning of environmental balance has to be brought home to man through proper education. Ecology and animal world are essential in themselves and not only for use of man. The training of science and economy has to be on the basis of the wholistic ideology.

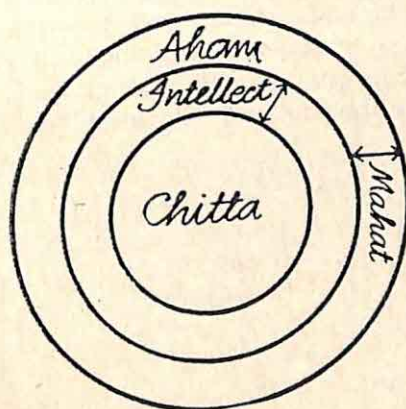
But the twin functions of the liberation of intellect and raising the level of consciousness can not be performed by teachers, who themselves, are dogma-ridden and tradition bound. Holding of degrees and doctorates should not be the only criterion for selection as teachers in institutes of higher learning. They should be enlightened persons with a spirit of dedication and full of zeal for reforms. Weaknesses of character should never be allowed in this category. Their own behaviour should be ideal. They should be becoming lights for ushering a new age Society, should pay them well so that they are not pulled down by their material wants. The scales of pay of teachers should compare favourably with those of the top level administrative services.

The present system of examinations breeds most of the evils of our education system. Just as the methods adopted by candidates to be elected have polluted the political system, so the means adopted by teachers and students to pass the examinations have ruined the academic world. Volumes have been written on the defects of the present examination system and the quantification of academic merit in terms of marks obtained. Yet in any discussion on the functions of higher education, this subject bears repetition. Briefly speaking there must be constant evolution of the growth of knowledge and objectivity of a student and no final reckoning in a fortnight annual memory tests on various subjects. Students should



be encouraged to think for themselves, rather than stuff their minds with other's thoughts and vomit them on paper at a given time.

Philosophically, intellect is defined as the area between the *Chitta* and the *Aham*. *Chitta* is that portion of the mind which reacts to external stimuli and is full of impressions and images of things seen, heard etc. This portion of the mind is almost mechanical and constantly in the flux i.e. ever changing. It is the conscious and the sub-conscious mind. It has a static effect on the power of discrimination i.e. *Buddhi* or intellect. It represents the process of acquisition of the external world by the ego. To the extent the mind is too much with the world, it is not free to think objectively. It gives the picture of the "done I" i.e. 'I' under the influence of the world. The *Aham* or Ego on the other hand denotes the activating principle. All impulses emerge from the ego or 'I'. It is the center of every unit existence. It is at the same time attached and detached from the '*Chitta*'—attached in the sense that without its approval no impressions are formed and detached in the sense that it transcends the mechanical mind and can oversee, control and mould it. The free area between *Chitta* and *Aham* is intellect. It can roughly be shown in the following diagram :



The inner circle represents the erudified portion of the mind called *chitta*. The outer circle represents the Ego or *Aham*. It is subtler than *chitta*. The free area between the two is "Intellect" or *Buddhi*.

The intellect is called liberated when it transcends the ego and moves towards '*Mahat*' or the universal. This is only possible



by a process of mental discipline and detachment which can be achieved by further sublification of the intellect and its getting free from the binding of the *chitta* and the *Aham*.

Mind becomes subtle by thinking on the abstract, the unchanging and eternal. Very briefly speaking this is possible when mind becomes aware of itself or gets subjectivised. As long as the medium of mental activity is physicality it remains crude, but when it flows on the stream of art and literature, music and meditation it starts becoming subtle. Thinking on Maths and fundamentals of sciences also has similar effect.

Institutes of higher learning should therefore, take the students to the root of every subject, rather than feed them on a bundle of information with a view to mug it up. The present system of lectures, should be replaced by discussions and seminars where there is greater interaction between the teacher and the taught. Books should serve as stimulants and not the goals of learning. The capacity to learn should be developed rather than stuffing the mind with ready made learning.

This will only be possible when degrees and employment are disassociated and the aim of higher education is not securing a passport to a job. Training and education should be distinguished. Medical and engineering colleges and other similar institutions should be schools of training and not part of higher education. Higher education should restrict itself to research and the efforts to extend the frontiers of knowledge.

# Some Higher Education Fallacies

G. C. SINGHVI

We all know that "one of our most critical sub-systems"—higher education—is in crisis. We also know that the crisis of higher education is more a problem of growth (expansion not followed by consolidation) than of failure. No one should, therefore, be under any illusions about the far reaching nature and the gravity of higher education problems. "The college and the university are the first way-station on the road to this modern world so uninviting, so unrewarding, so unprotecting". Therefore whatever thinking that we may bestow on higher education must be circumspect.

However, there is no dearth of people who proudly contend that those who want to indulge in writing or speaking with a view to giving expression to their considered views on higher education should have credentials to do so. There are educationists who lament over the fact and term it a misfortune of education that any body who has been a recipient of higher education considers himself to be competent enough to dabble with ideas on education. They perhaps think that it is an exclusive preserve of the educationists and should be left to them. This writer must respectfully and pardonably disagree with them.

Educationists, proximity to education actually disturbs their perspective on education. Moreover any suggestion which comes from a noneducationist has to be taken as a suggestion from a consumer, a client and a person at the receiving end. After all pro-



ducers do expect a feed back from the consumers in order to cater to the needs of the latter. As consumers of food do we have no right to tell the cooks what defects or shortcomings we have observed in the meals they have cooked and we consume? We certainly have such a right, even though we may not be deft in the culinary art.

It is in the spirit delineated in the preceding paragraph that this writer, through the medium of this paper, is making an earnest endeavour to projecting some fallacies prevalent in higher education and what should be done to remove them. Obviously it is for the powers that be, including of course educationists, to pick these up and with the breath of vision respond to them. With only this small prologue, the writer proposes straightway to identify some fallacies (examples like these can be multiplied endlessly) with which higher education seems to him to be beset.

#### INSTRUCTION IN TEACHING AND RESEARCH AT THE POST GRADUATE LEVEL

One fallacy comprises the widely held belief that the holders of degrees of Ph.D make better university or college teachers.

Now for doing one's Ph.D one has to conduct research and write a thesis but one does not have to teach. A person who stammers or otherwise has a defective speech might have got his doctorate degree with distinction and as such might be a good researcher but he certainly would not be a good teacher.

To tackle the question on a different plane, we have to ask ourselves as to why does a student go in for a post-graduate course of study. In other words why does a student aspire to be an M.A., M.Com., M.Sc., LL.M., etc. (and these are all master's degrees).

The answer to this question would essentially vary from student to student. A majority of the students join these masters' degree courses to kill time and to save themselves, for the time being, from the odium of being called unemployed. They have passed their degree examination and they therefore think that they must go in for a post graduate degree course as facilities for these are available and should be availed of. There are others who want to pursue such studies for their own sake—knowledge for the sake of knowledge—but such idealists are few and far between. An overwhelming majority of serious students who pursue these courses of studies go in for these with a twin objective and the twin objective

comprises preparation for a teaching career and preparation for a career in research.

It is then a moot point for consideration whether our courses for post graduate studies equip the students for a teaching career and a career in research. If we turn the pages of the syllabi of these courses, we will find that they are conspicuous by the absence of any provision for such preparation. Normally in such post graduate courses there are eight papers. Some universities for some courses have made a provision for submission of thesis in lieu of one paper. Writing of a thesis certainly prepares a student for undertaking research in future but writing of a thesis should always be preceded by an acquisition of knowledge of research methods and methodology which is a *sine-gua-non* for undertaking research. On the other hand so far as teaching is concerned, hardly any post graduate course equips a student to become a teacher of that subject.

In this backdrop, an humble suggestion could be offered and that is that instead of having eight papers on the subject, the syllabi for such courses should have six papers on the subject—three for the first year and three for the second year. The place of the remaining two papers should rightfully be taken over by papers on “teaching” and “research”.

In the first year Master's degree class, for example, teaching of the subject may be prescribed as a compulsory paper. It should cover principles of teaching followed by practice in teaching. For the latter the student should be made to deliver at least 20 lectures on the subject to different classes of the under graduate courses and when he delivers the lectures his tutor should be present there not only to watch his performance but to offer his guidance also for further improvement.

On these very lines in the second year class study of research methods and methodology followed by the writing of a thesis could be prescribed as component parts of one paper. To start with a student should be given instruction in research methods and methodology. He should then be asked to write a thesis.

By prescribing these two papers as part of the syllabus of post graduate courses in different subjects, the universities would be doing a signal service to the educational system of the country by providing a nourishing environment because anybody who passes



through this mill will not remain unacquainted with teaching and research and in the process adjudge for himself his capabilities both for teaching and research.

Likewise after doing one's master's degree if one wants to go in for doing one's Ph.D. it should be insisted upon that the candidate will do teaching cum research during his two or three years which he would take in doing his Ph.D. If 'for example' a candidate takes say 50 periods of teaching under graduate classes during this period, it will stand him in a good stead in his future career as a college or university teacher. Only then will Ph.D. make better college or university teachers.

#### A REGISTRAR-GENERAL OF LIBRARIES FOR APPROVING MANUSCRIPTS OF BOOKS

Another fallacy is that the number of standard books of use to students pursuing courses in higher education is not upto the mark because talent is scarce.

Now authors of books particularly those who have already not written books and have, thus, not entered the field so far, find it pretty difficult to get their books published. The publishers do not want to take a risk involved in publishing books written by authors who, in their view, are inexperienced. The reasons are too obvious to need any elaboration.

The authors of the books can ordinarily be sustained only if their books are purchased by libraries. For individuals very rarely buy books and then there are books which are of the utmost use to libraries rather than to individuals.

Resultantly, either the authors get the books published by themselves or they get some publishers. The publishers undertake the job most reluctantly and on terms which are not always favourable to the authors. Both ways it assumes the form of an impasse and the authors must be taken out of the impasse if scholarship is to be encouraged in the country for serving higher education.

In this context a suggestion comes to mind. We can think on the lines of having a Registrar-General of Libraries in the Government of India. All the libraries in the country could be made to get themselves registered with that Registrar-General. The number of books and the number of periodical journals and newspapers they get, can be reported to the Registrar-General by these libraries

periodically. The Registrar-General could issue instructions and guidance for the maintenance of the libraries from time to time.

Apart from that, a system should be devised in which any author who writes a book may submit say four copies of the manuscript to the Registrar-General of Libraries. The Registrar-General could charge some prescribed fee (It could be say Rs 500.00 to Rs 1,000.00 depending on the number of words in the book). In consideration thereof the Registrar-General should send the manuscript to three experts on the subject for giving their independent assessment of the book. For this purpose a panel of experts shall have to be prepared for each subject by the Registrar-General of Libraries and the experts will have to be paid modest remuneration also. On receipt of assessment reports on the merits and demerits of the book from the experts, the Registrar-General could if the experts speak high of the book, put it on his approved list. A book enlisted by the Registrar-General should be published only with his tacit approval. Fixation of price of the book should also be done with the approval of the Registrar General.

Periodically a list of such approved books should be circulated by the Registrar-General to all the registered libraries of the country. In the list the name of the author, the price of the book and the name of the publisher should also be incorporated. Once a book finds place on this approved list, libraries should be at liberty to go in for the purchase of the book at the prescribed price, without entering into any other formalities.

After such a system has been devised, the chances are that the books will be purchased by the libraries in a sizeable number which, in turn, will sustain the authors as well as the publishers. As it is, today for master's degree courses of several universities specific books have either not been prescribed or if prescribed they are not available in the market. The system advocated herein would help ease the situation in this behalf. The libraries will also be relieved to a great extent from worrying about the quality of the books they are going to purchase. And all this will give a much needed boost to education including inter alia higher education as well.

#### DEGREES IN HOME MANAGEMENT FOR HOMELY WOMEN

The third fallacy is the conviction that even girls who want just to be housewives should also be put through the same educational courses as the boys are put through.



Actually girls who want to take up careers in any walk of life—Arts, Science, Commerce, Law, Social Work, Home Science, Engineering, Medicine, Accountancy, Agriculture, etc., are and should be at liberty to pursue courses of education leading to bachelor's, master's or doctorate degrees in those subjects. There should be no problem for them.

The problem would raise its inexorable head when we come to think of girls who have no ambition of taking up careers but who only want to be good housewives and be deft in the art (and not the science by any chance) of house management. And it has to be conceded that in our country majority of girls going to colleges choose to settle down as house wives and in that capacity as competent managers of their own house-holds.

For such girls the traditional education in humanities, science, etc. is inexcusably of no use. And it is quite a familiar sight to see married women masters' degree holders in Philosophy, Psychology, English Literature, Hindi Literature, History, Sociology, Zoology, Botany etc. etc., doing no work other than looking after the household where they feel in retrospect that they would perhaps have been much better off had they instead received some such education as would have equipped them to be better managers of the household.

What knowledge do such non-careerist women need in their day to day life? If we ponder over the matter we would visualise that they need to be good at language (speaking and writing both) and know the essentials of culture, history and geography with special reference to India. In addition they should know cooking, sewing, washing, pressing and a little drawing and painting also. They should have knowledge of elementary book-keeping and arithmetic to enable them maintain the account of the household and balance the family budget. They should be acquainted with principles of health, hygiene and nutrition, first aid and medicines of day to day use. Their knowledge about child bearing, child rearing and child education should be sound. Then rail travel, bus travel, air travel, banks, life insurance, water supply, electric supply, house tax, income tax, post office, telephone and telegraphs are subjects the rudiments of which should be known to them. How to operate a bicycle, a scooter, a motorcar and modern gadgets and how to set right ordinary defects in electricity, cooking gas, telephone, water



supply line, radio receivers etc. should be within the domain of their knowledge. The above, even though it covers the principal determinants in this behalf, is merely illustrative of what type of education by and large the non-careerist women stand in need of.

Keeping these things in view, a perennially attractive three year degree course leading to the award of a degree of Bachelor of Home Management (BHM) followed by two years masters' degree course leading to the award of the degree of Master of Home Management (MHM) could be devised for higher secondary school passed girls.

Such graduate and post graduate women, it is worth under scoring, would be able to run their homes better and with better status for themselves, and in the process will do good to themselves, their husbands, their children and above all their households.

#### TEACHING OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES

The fourth fallacy is that by introducing two year morning or evening diploma courses in foreign languages we have contentedly been thinking that we are doing full justice to the teaching of foreign languages.

It is a pity that when we talk of teaching of foreign languages, we generally have languages other than English in view. For somehow we are not reconciled to according to the status of a foreign language to English which we have, willy nilly, adopted as our own. And this is quite understandable though not at all justifiable.

Many universities have been running two years morning or evening courses in foreign languages like French, German and Russian. Candidates who have passed their say, higher secondary school examination are eligible for and accorded admission thereto. Classes are run for about 90 minutes (two periods of 45 minutes each) almost every day.

Those who pass the first year examination are awarded a certificate in the language concerned. Those who pass the second year examination are awarded a diploma. And a number of students have been through these apparently alluring courses.

Now two periods of 45 minutes each for two academic sessions for the study of a foreign language are not all adequate. The diploma holders can neither read the language fluently nor write

it properly nor speak it nicely. Nor is there any practical utility of having these diplomas. For neither can the diploma holder serve as a language teacher nor as a language interpreter. This venture, therefore, has been entailing loss of time, money and energy of the student community and causing avoidable loss of scarce resources to the universities also.

With a view to bringing about an improvement in the teaching of these foreign languages, it is suggested that any part time course in a foreign language should be a five year course and declared open to those who have passed the Higher Secondary School Examination. Classes could, as heretofore, be run in the mornings or evenings and there could be two periods of 45 minutes each. In so far as the course content is concerned, the endeavour should be to so equip the pupil that at the end of the five year term, the pupil may attain such proficiency in reading, writing and speaking the language as may be equivalent to the standard of the language, as a pass course subject for the bachelor's degree. If these courses could be re-devised in such a manner, they would be utilitarian in character and be in the interest of the universities and their students.

It may be added that a five year course has been suggested so that it could be completed simultaneously with M A., M Com., or M.Sc. The class wise nomenclature could be some what like.

|                    |   |                     |
|--------------------|---|---------------------|
| First Year Course  | — | Junior Certificate  |
| Second Year Course | — | Senior Certificate  |
| Third Year Course  | — | Junior Diploma      |
| Fourth Year Course | — | Senior Diploma      |
| Fifth Year Course  | — | Proficiency Diploma |

The above nomenclature has been suggested so that those candidates who feel disinclined to continue with the course at the end of any year might drop out and leave the institution with the satisfaction that they have at least earned a certificate or a diploma.

In case, however, this is not found feasible, it would perhaps be better to face facts boldly and discontinue the teaching of these foreign languages in the universities on the lines it is being done at the moment. It should better be left to universities and institutes like the Jawaharlal Nehru University of Delhi and the Institute of German Studies at Poona which are fully and admirably equipped to teach foreign languages.



## POST GRADUATE TEACHING AND RESEARCH CENTRES

The fifth fallacy is that the more the places in any state where post graduate education and research facilities are available, the merrier (a matter of pride) it is for the State.

There have been instances of master's degree classes in a particular subject being held at a number of State and University Colleges/Departments in a State and in some the number of students hardly justifies the existence of masters' degree classes in that subject.

If there are, say, only four students in M.A. (Previous) English Literature in a college, or only three students in LL.M. (Final) in a college or a department of a university and if this number is round about the same in all the institutions, imagine what a tremendous waste of scarce resources it entails. If somehow each one of these classes is decided to be held at one location in a State, the immense advantages likely to accrue out of it need only be imagined. We could have more expertise in teaching, better library facilities and better research facilities.

If we care dispassionately to examine the proposition, we will find that if we decide upon having one centre for post graduate studies and research for every discipline in a State (We could have more than one centre in bigger States) and that too at every district headquarter town or city, we would be effecting so much decentralisation and saving in expenditure that we might to an appreciable extent subsidise the hostel expenditure of students who would be required to come from other places to join that centre.

We cannot and should not forget that even at the moment there are a few big cities and towns which have these facilities for post graduate studies and research. Accordingly students belonging to other places do join hostels if they want to pursue further studies. In the scheme envisaged more students will be required to join hostels. That is about all. The feasibility of opening one or two or may be three centres in a State (depending on the size of the State) for post graduate teaching and research in all Arts, Science, Commerce and Law subjects like History, Political Science, Economics, Sociology, English, Hindi, Sanskrit, Urdu, Geography, Social Work, Physics, Chemistry, Botany, Zoology, Accountancy, Business Management, Financial and Economic Management, Constitutional Law,

Criminal Law, Civil Law, Personal Law, Commercial Law, etc. and scattering the centres by locating each centre at a district head-quarter town or city, could be examined and explored.

### PROFESSIONAL AND ACADEMIC LEGAL EDUCATION

The sixth fallacy is that it is the Bar Council of India whose dictates are honoured by the Universities on the front of legal education. And it is so because we have miserably failed to make a tangible distinction between professional and academic studies in law.

Professional legal studies are required to be pursued by those who want to join the bar or the bench. Academic legal studies are required to be pursued by those who want to go in for teaching or research in law. The prosecution of the former should be in the domain of the Bar Council of India (a professional body) and that of the latter of the Universities (academic bodies).

Instead of having the existing stereotyped two, three or five year LL.B. courses we could think of having B.A. (Hons.) in Law with six general papers of law. After doing one's B.A. (Hons.) in Law, one should make up his mind whether he would like to go in for further studies in law and if so whether for professional studies or academic studies. Those who opt for the former should seek practical attachment with a practising advocate for three years in course of which he should (through personal or postal coaching) pass his Bar-at law (or some such other nomenclature could be devised) examination. Once a candidate is called to the Bar, he should be considered eligible to start legal practice or to join the judicial services. Those who opt for academic studies in law should join M A. in Law and after passing their M A. Examination may, if they so like, do their Ph.D. in law. Thereafter they could go in for teaching or research in law.

One need only imagine if we could rationalise our legal studies in this bewildering and exciting manner, we would be getting better lawyers, better judges, better law teachers and better law researchers and the need for all these in our country is unquestionable.

### TEACHING AND AFFILIATING UNIVERSITIES : CONCEPT AND STRUCTURE

The seventh and the last fallacy chosen for being given a cursory treatment in this paper is that a university should be a seat



of learning (a teaching university) rather than a mere affiliating body.

Every university, whether it is a seat of learning or an affiliating body, it has to be appreciated, has got to be "a syllabus setting, examining, and degree granting" body. These three crucial functions may, therefore, be taken for granted for all universities

Coming to the distinction between teaching and affiliating universities, it may be emphasised that the Vice-Chancellors of the former have, even if they may not relish it, to assume the role of an administrator and consider their job as having admirably been accomplished if they somehow manage to manage the day to day affairs of their universities. The powers that be, therefore, tend to appoint only such persons as Vice-Chancellors of universities who are good administrators rather than those who are good academicians. And rarely is a person endowed with both scholarship (and there is no substitute for scholarship in education) and courage (and there is no substitute for courage in administration). In the bargain administration understandably takes precedence over academics and academics irretrievably suffers.

On the other hand in Universities, which are merely affiliating bodies, the Vice-Chancellors can concentrate on bringing about academic excellence because they are free from the ordeal of dealing with the day to day administration (and inter-alia free from facing law and order situations).

There are yet a couple of other angles from which this problem is to be viewed. One angle comprises the theory of separation of powers. It was in pursuance of the dictates of this theory that the constitution of India ordained that judiciary shall be separated from the executive in the public services and this separation has, by and large, been accomplished. It has been basically in conformity with this theory that audit has unmistakably been separated from accounts, prosecution has, much to the chagrin of police, been separated from police and in commercial establishments a person holding custody of cash is never the person writing the cash book. Likewise, prudence warrants that the body charged with conducting examinations should not be entrusted with teaching which prepares students for appearing at those examinations.

Another angle comprises governmental control. The Government has a whole armoury of weapons at its disposal which



it can use to subdue and control the universities and the universities have therefore willy-nilly to 'go' with the Government. In the process university autonomy suffers a set back. If universities cease to be teaching (seat of learning) bodies but remain only affiliating, syllabus setting, examining and degree granting bodies, they will undeniably be comparatively insulated against the kinds of pressure that the Governments of the day can and usually exert. Freed from the trammels of Governmental control, the university (comprising non-teaching affiliating body) system in the country may have some future.

In the Indian context, therefore, the concept of a university should accordingly be more of an affiliating, rather than a teaching, university. Actually teaching should be left to private or Government colleges or departments. Only in that event will universities be able to concentrate on achieving academic excellence (through syllabus setting, conducting examinations and granting degrees) leaving the routinous day to day administration to the heads of the affiliated educational institutions.

To illustrate, we may cite the instance of Rajasthan. Rajasthan has three State Universities located at Jaipur, Udaipur and Jodhpur. Jaipur and Udaipur universities are teaching as well as affiliating universities but Jodhpur university is a mere teaching university and not an affiliating university. Accordingly, unfortunately, a lot of valuable time and energy of the harassed Vice-Chancellors of all the three universities is devoured by the day to day administration of the affairs of the teaching departments located at Jaipur, Udaipur and Jodhpur respectively leaving the vice-chancellors hardly any time for looking into the issues impinging on academic excellence. Had, instead, there been one university for the whole of Rajasthan as an affiliating, syllabus setting, examining and degree granting body and had actual teaching been mercifully left to colleges and departments working under the State Government, it would not only have added immeasurably to giving things a proper shape on the dual fronts of teaching and academic standard setting but would also have triggered an unprecedented speed up and enrichment of almost the entire university educational system.

What has been set out in the preceding paragraphs, in a nutshell, are the seven fallacies which this writer wanted to project in this paper, and this is perhaps the right time to consider how much

of the traditional basis is worth preserving and how much worth jettisoning. As an epilogue, it may now be stated that it is for educational researchers to consider these projects-these ideological sheet anchors in their correct perspective for conducting pragmatic research on them. This writer can only boldly assert this much that the results of these researches would importantly and stimulatingly be of a significantly practical application in the field of education, and encouragingly tend to make a distinctive contribution to our total educational endeavour, which admittedly stands in needs of a tangible and positive refurbishing. Let there be no mistake.





# Vedic Education

K. C. KULISH

The question as to how the Vedic lore can be included in the syllabus of higher education has afforded me a pleasurable experience, but at the same time it has baffled me. The question is comforting because of the fact that for the first time the authorities have thought of the Vedas. It is baffling too because one does not know how the vedic learning can be introduced into higher education alone.

The Vedas contain perfect knowledge and perfect science. The knowledge or science that is not to be found in the Vedas, cannot be found anywhere else. All the main *Shastras* of India regard the Vedas as authentic. The ideology which was not authenticated by the Vedas, was not recognised by people in India and if it happened to be in vogue for some time, it never lasted long and eventually came to an end. It is the Vedas that are said to be the soul of India. As the vedic learning suffered decay India also began to experience a down-fall. Whatever remains in the name of India is because of the Vedas. All other remarkable things which gave India an identity vanished but the vedic style of life still exists precisely in the same form as it did in the past.

We have behind us a long history of 2500 years during which a number of dynasties like the Guptas, the Huns, the Shakas, the Mughals, the Pathans, the Turks, the Tudors and so on, ruled over this country but none of these could ever influence India's culture or education. The ruinous change that came in our thinking

and life style during the last hundred & fifty years was due to the influence of Macaulay's system of education. It is because of this that the educated people of this country began to deride the Vedas, the Puranas, the ethics and the customs and traditions; in short our entire cultural heritage, and began to believe that all knowledge, whether scientific or philosophic, originated in the west. India had no ideology of its own. Not only this, Indian culture began to be regarded as dogmatic and old-fashioned. In this way Macaulay's dream began to take shape.

Now we are a free nation but in what sense are we free? We are free only in our behaviour and practices but ideologically we are still slaves. Both these states are fatal. We have completely been possessed with the western ideology in our educational, economic and political policies. This has progressively complicated our problems.

I am of the opinion that education should be entrusted with the job of solving the problems of the country. It is citizens who build a nation and we should have a clear vision of the type of citizens we need. The prosperity of a nation does not lie in the construction of long roads and huge buildings but the human resources of the country. Whenever we had a discussion on how to increase national resources we never gave any thought to the development of man-power and human resources. At best we talked of itself to making employment available to a certain number of people in a certain plan-period. How easy it is to think that a full meal alone will develop India's human resources and solve all national problems.

Provision of bread and butter alone has never developed man-power. This important task can be performed only by education. It is education alone that can make an individual what we call man. Hence it must be able to touch the very soul of the nation and bring it into light. It is needless to repeat that the soul of India lies in the Vedas. I can assert that the true education policy of India would be that which is based on the Vedas. If the system of education based on the the Vedas had been introduced as soon as we got freedom, the image of this country would have been quite different from what it is today and a new generation learned in the Vedic system of education would have emerged.



Unfortunately there is a lot of misconception about the Vedas. It is generally believed by outsiders and even half backed Indians that they do not go beyond prescribing a daily performance of the *Yajna* and are thus rigidly ritualistic, and lack any philosophic content. Others believe that their philosophic content is too abstruse to be of any practical use. What a pity that this opinion should exist among the natives of the country where the Vedas were composed !

In fact the Vedas contain perfect knowledge and exact science. What we see, hear and glorify as modern science is nothing but a system of creating problems and confounding the people with ever-changing answers. The Vedic science, on the other hand, does not change. It is based not on presumption but on substantial grounds. If in the Vedas the measurement of our body is said to be equal to the length of 84 fingers (*anguls*), this must be exactly the same and not less. It is backed by irrefutable proofs too. If the Vedas tell us that for reproduction the semen of man must contain 28 chromosomes, be sure that the said number would be the same. If according to the Vedas, the life span of the sun is equal to the period of the creation of one thousand comets it will be exactly the same and not more or less by a day. If the Vedas say this world has been created out of water then it is certain that the whole creation has emerged out of water. This is a thesis to which even western scientists subscribe now.

According to the vedic standards the principles or fundamentals of science are irrevocable. There is no room for presumptions or hypothesis in them. Also according to the vedic definition science is that knowledge which does not bring any calamity or misfortune to man. There is no room for illusion or doubt in the vedic science. Whatever is worth knowing in the name of science has been discovered for us by the sages of the Vedas.

The vedic science is the knowledge of the universe. The Vedas have answered such questions as : How did this universe come into existence ? What are its constituents ? What is soul ? What is life ? How does life come into being ? What becomes of the soul after death and what form does it take ? The vast knowledge of astronomy which is found in the Vedas, is not to be found elsewhere. What are the different forms of fire, water, air and word etc. ? What are the five elements; how did they originate and how

is the body formed out of them ? What is the spiritual form of our body ? The body is a part of the world, hence we can have the vision of the entire world in the body. What is *yajna* ? How are *Brahman*, the creator, and Nature related to the *yajna* ? This is the laboratory of the vedic science. Why is it so ?

All the above questions have been elaborately investigated and discussed in the Vedas, and that too scientifically. History, mathematics, astronomy, grammar, prosody, medicine etc. and many other sciences are based on the Vedas.

It is worth mentioning that the Vedas are not merely voluminous books. They are the basic elements of the universe which have originated from the fundamental element that is *Brahman*. The whole creation evolved out of the Vedic trinity of the air, the fire and the sun. The books in which we find an elaborate discussion of these are the *Rig Veda*, the *Yajurveda* and the *Samveda*. Basically all these three are the Veda of Fire and they change their forms when the situation arises. The fourth Veda is the *Atharva Veda* which deals with the *soma*, i.e., water. The glory and prestige of all the three Vedas of the Fire is due to the element of water and the universe comes into existence because of the union of the fire and the water. The Vedas in the form of books can be said to be the Vedas in written form, but basically the Vedas are the names of elements.

Having learnt all this about the Vedas, can anybody object to their acceptance ? Who would not want to know about the planets or the earth or the human body ? The Vedas are such learning as every one will willingly and readily accept. They are science that transcends time and space, dogmas and theories; sects and isms. This science is not beneficial to man only but to all the living beings. This can be the only science acceptable to all.

Will it not be in the interest of our country to make this science the basis of our education policy ? As far the higher education is concerned there is a difference of outlook only. If we make lower and higher divisions in education we fail to accept knowledge as indivisible. No science can be effective if it assumes the form of divisible knowledge. If we introduce the vast knowledge of the Vedas partially into the higher education, we shall deprive ourselves of the desired result. The best thing is to begin education with the Vedas.



The vedas are basically compendiums or testaments (*Samhita*). We find their ritualistic aspect in the *Brahmin Granthas*, the modes of worship in the *Aranyakas*, and the philosophical aspect in the *upnishads*. The same knowledge finds its expression in the form of symbolic stories of the *Puranas*. There is nothing like mythological or fabulous in our scriptures. It is an irony of fate that the so called educated persons of our country regard the *Puranas* as something mythical or fabricated. It is needless to say that all our *Puranas* or scriptures have a scientific basis and the symbols used in them can be scientifically understood with the help of etiology or by applying the principle of cause and effect.

Vedic education is benign and beneficial at any age and any time. It can be included in the higher education, but the problem is that our higher education is based on fragmentary knowledge. We impart scrappy knowledge of all the subjects and that is why even after passing higher classes our graduates fail to acquire a view point of their own about life and the world. This deficiency can be met with only by the Vedas. The *Upnishads* which are the philosophical content of the Vedas, can be included in the syllabus of higher education.

As I have already said the Vedas contain perfect knowledge and they are pure science. Hence they should not be taught in fragments because incomplete knowledge cuts no ice.

If only the *Upnishads* are included in higher education, we will merely understand the philosophical aspect of the Vedas. We know that the ritualistic aspect of the Vedas is to be found in the *Brahmin Granthas* and the ways and methods of worship in the *Aranyakas*. This knowledge reaches people when they read the *Purans* or scriptures in their own languages.

The Vedas explain man as the inter-mixture or unity of the Soul (*atman*), the mind (*manas*), the intellect (*buddhitatva*) and the body (*sharir*). The Vedas contain in them the knowledge of all these four. The physical aspect or the body is the motor aspect of man. The mind or the heart comprises the effective domain of man and is said to be the votary. It is full of fidelity. The domain of wisdom is supposed to be the collector of knowledge. The soul is omnipresent and universal. This concept of man forms the concept of vedic learning. As in the absence of any one aspect the man is incomplete so without acquiring any one section of vedic knowledge,



the knowledge of the Vedas would be incomplete and worthless. If there is no body or if it is sick, man is supposed to be incomplete. If the mind is absent from human body or if the body becomes lax, man too becomes inert. In absence of knowledge the human life is vested in ignorance. In the same way ritualistic aspect, philosophical aspect and means and methods of worship have their individual importance in the domain of the Vedas. Hence to know each one and every one of them is the true learning. It is not possible to impart even briefly the whole knowledge of the Vedas as it is contained in them. It may be possible for us to make the learner acquire a nodding acquaintance with the Vedic learning but it would be very difficult for the graduates to translate the acquired knowledge in their life. The best way, would be to initiate the child's education with the A.B.C. of the vedic learning. All other forms of education would be merely bookish and would be impracticable.

If we wish to keep the vedic learning limited to the bookish knowledge as is the case with our modern system of education we can include it in the higher education in the form of bookish learning. Here I may suggest that after making a comprehensive plan of vedic learning we should introduce it to the domain of higher education for the time being and then it should be brought down to the level of primary education in a certain period.

There are many difficulties in the way of including the Vedas in education. Hence it is necessary for us to go ahead with planned programme. The greatest need is to bring the scientific form of the Vedas into light. We all know that there are many mistaken conceptions about the Vedas in the mind of people. The priests (*Pandits*) have made the Vedas only the means of performing conventional rites and rituals. For the common people the Vedas are nothing but the ceremony consisting of offering oblations to the consecrated fire (*Agani Hotra*) or for them the Vedas are something which is beyond their comprehension. The concept that the vedas are supernal or divine knowledge, strikes the common people as something mystical like divine power.

This is true that Vedas are supernal or providential knowledge. The Vedic knowledge is providential in the sense that the Vedas in the form of elements are the ingredients of the creation and it is out of these elements the universe has been created. Hence it is proper to call them supernal or providential '*Rig*', '*Yaju*', '*Soma*'

and 'Atharva' are though the names of the Vedas, are also the names of the elements of Fire, Air, Sun and Water and the book which contains the knowledge of the element is named after it. For example the book which tells us about the element of Fire (*RIK*) is called the Rig Veda. *Rik* stand for fire (*Agni*) and it is not that fire which is used in our daily life. It is in existence in the form of subtle element. The Vedas are regarded to be supernal or providential because the knowledge about the creation given to man by the *Rishis* with the help of their prudence through the Vedas is, in fact, divine knowledge. A man with ordinary prudence can not comprehend this knowledge. This prudence or intellect has been called *Ritimbhra Pragyā* in the *Shastras*. The *Rishis*, who originated the Vedas did not have the facility in the form of modern laboratory or observatory with the help of which they were able to acquire the knowledge of creation and universe. *Pragyā* or prudence was the only means with the help of which they could provide us with the transcendental or supernatural knowledge,

In India the Vedas are regarded to be authentic because they have not so far been falsified or proved to be false. They are true and irrevocable. This is our misfortune that inspite of having such knowledge, we have not been able to enrich ourselves with it. I am of opinion that the policy of indigenous rule, the policy of education, the policy of finance, the policy of politics and all the important principles must be based on the Vedas. Along with the government, the learned thinkers must make their best to bring the Vedic knowledge into lime light. It is also necessary that the mistaken assumptions or misconceptions regarding the vedas must be removed.

There are misconceptions not only about the Vedas but about the modern science as well. The common conception about science is that science is nothing but machines. Whatever is produced by machine or known with the help of machine is said to be scientific. This conception is not a conception but it is misconception. Machines are only technology and the nature of technology is kaleidoscopic and changes as per time and means. Technology has a long history. The cart-wheel, when it was made, was regarded to be as great achievement as the modern space craft. In future too technology may produce marvels and may go on changing.

This may be asserted that the machines have been invented on the basis of the laws of science. The basis on which machines



have been invented is the experience of man's day to day life. For example the kettle made us experience the energy of steam. Similar experiences were felt by various people and they invented different machines on the basis of their experiences. Telegraph, telephone, railway train, motor car, gramophone, radio and television are all such inventions. These inventions are called scientific ones, but infact all these are merely the passage of the progress of technology. Among these, no doubt, there is some contribution of physics but that is basically felt by experience. The researches done in the name of science are also experiences. Every research is a new experience.

The vedic science is not an experience. The vedic description of physics is such as is not available any where. We do not find such a detailed knowledge of matter else where. This knowledge is not the product of experience or perception nor it is a mere assumption. It is the fundamental knowledge, pure knowledge, and true knowledge which never changes. The knowledge which we get from the Vedas about how the matter was produced, how its forms go on changing, how colours are formed, what is meant by the change of seasons, what are the types of creation, how many species are there, how they are evolved; and about the sun, the moon, the stars, the water, the earth, the air, the fire and so on, is the final knowledge on such subjects; and this knowledge is the only science. This is why our *Shastras* regard the Vedas authentic.

The concept of science as is given in the Vedas is to know one, is, knowledge and to know various things is science.

All that is created out of one vanishes or fuses into one. How are many evolved or generated out of one and how do they fuse into one? To find an answer to this very question is science. This involves every thing. There remains nothing out of it. Hence I insist on making the Vedas the basis of our education. No other way can lead us to right destination.



# New Education Policy- Hopes and Fears

T. N. CHATURVEDI

The making or revision of an Education Policy is a difficult and delicate task for any country. If we look around the world, we find that by and large the approach towards a comprehensive policy is a comparatively recent phenomenon. In a constantly changing environment, economic, technological and political changes are always taking place. It is for this reason an Education Policy can never be a once-for-all-time affair.

An Education Policy has to be something growing and evolving conforming to changing national requirements and imperatives. An Education Policy, for that matter any policy, is not just spun out of the cerebral process of either an individual or a group. It is the resultant of various interacting forces and varied thinking. All these aspects assume importance when efforts are made to convert the policy into programmes and projects. This necessitates the need for a periodical stock-taking and assessment as well as renewal of policy and programmes. 'National Policy on Education 1986' has attracted a lot of public attention. As considerable time had elapsed from the adoption of earlier National Policy in 1968, the Prime Minister felt that there was an over-riding need to have a look at the education scenario in the country and rework the Education Policy in view of the fact that the world was becoming increasingly

technological, competitive and the challenges of the next century would be both multiple and more complex. In any case in India there has been criticism of the system of education in various forms and on various levels not only before attainment of Independence but even later on. Education during British rule criticised as being theoretical since it was introduced by the foreign rulers to serve their own ends, and was therefore not producing public-minded and self-reliant citizens. It was felt that education was lacking a vocational basis and quality was not as it should have been. When India became free, a large number of assurances were held but once the euphoria began to wane, the criticism of education again became to be voiced from many other angles also. At times we would witness the pathetic scene of Indian educational system being criticised by publicmen and academicians as being worthless. Naturally, the students were bewildered seeing that what was considered as worthless was still being doled out to them. It is not surprising then that there was hardly any respect for that system of education either by the public, the teachers and the taught.

A positive point necessitating reformation of Education Policy has been the expanding requirements of a developing economy and democratic society. It is, therefore, in the fitness of things that the new Education Policy was formulated. It was preceded by wide-spread discussion and debate in the Press and on public platforms as well as in the conferences of experts both, foreign and Indian. This discussion took place not only at the level of the Union Government and the Ministry of Education, but a large number of seminars, conferences and discussions were organised and sponsored throughout the country. A Status Paper was prepared which tried to sum up the experiences of the last few decades, underlined the areas of weakness and also attempted to identify the directions in which changes were called for from the stand-point of improvements in the system. Later on a document known as the 'National Policy of Education 1986' was published which provides a perspective of developments in education. It is a perceptive document. The exposition in the policy document is divided into 12 parts emphasising among others 'The Essence and Role of Education', the character of 'National System of Education' aimed at our egalitarian or social objectives, the organisation of education at different stages, vocationalisation, higher education, promotion



of effectiveness and quality of educational methodology and processes. It takes into account the need for strengthening libraries, values in the educational system, role of youth, training technology and examination reforms, etc. The role of the teacher has been re-emphasised and a good deal of importance is given to the training of teachers. Naturally the aspect of the management of the education system which is crucial, and especially so in our country, which is federal in nature, has received sufficient importance. The problems of resources and of monitoring have been highlighted. The policy document takes a comprehensive and rounded view of the educational processes and problems in the country in the light of past experience and with an eye to the future. The crux of a good policy lies in its implementation. It is from this angle that another document followed which provides more concrete operational lines and is called 'programme of action'. Apart from other background papers these three basic documents, therefore, become quite relevant for an adequate consideration of Education Policy. It is not possible to go into all aspects within the compass of a few pages or in one article and therefore it is proposed to touch on some of the main points briefly.

Any observations made by way of critique are based on the belief that firstly the existing experience must be taken into account at every stage; secondly, continuing vigilance is called for; thirdly, without scientifically conceived implementation programme even the best of policies become meaningless; and fourthly, demands and requirements of a core of uniformity have to be imaginatively reconnected. The mobilisation of financial resources and of enthusiasm and support of the community along with principal actors in the educational world, are words charged with certain tangible operational significance. Probably a prioritisation of even the priorities as embodied in the policy may be essential for its ultimate success. But this may require not only capacity for discernment, working and reworking of sundry details and the alertness to apply correctives, if necessary, however unpleasant it may be; and the moral courage to cope with pulls and pressures of interest groups masquerading as bearers of professional wisdom and public interest. The policy becomes indeed a challenge to the will, capability and sagacity of the political system.

In my humble judgment what the National Policy refers to as "making the system work" is of paramount significance. It



enshrines the experience, the apprehensions as well as the hopes from the education policy. A small extract may be quoted as follows :

“The country has placed boundless trust in the educational system. The people have a right to expect concrete results. The first task is to make it work. All teachers should teach and all students study.

The Strategy in this behalf will consist—

- (a) a better deal to teachers with greater accountability;
- (b) provision of improved students' services and insistence on observance of acceptable norms of behaviour;
- (c) provision of better facilities to institutions; and
- (d) creation of a system of performance appraisals of institutions according to standards and norms set at the National or State levels.”

If the issues posed in the aforesaid extract can be resolved adequately one can have a sense of assurance about the success of the Education Policy 1986. If there is deviation, and dilution appears from the very beginning, then the education policy may, with the passage of time, appear as a statement of intentions. Hence the need for integrity of thought and action. The policy may be dazzling. The implementation process is intricate. The management of the system, however is a very difficult, unglamorous, steady and exacting process. Not many experts and academicians always devote themselves with firmness of mind and clarity of objectives to this pedestrian task. We cannot afford to ignore that largely the policy has to be implemented with the help initially of the same group of people who have been associated with it during the last few decades. Can there be a sudden transformation and metamorphosis of attitudes and motivations? As a neutral observer one would find very often by and large the same people who were not only the beneficiaries, but also the implementors, as leaders in the field of education at various levels, criticising the working of educational system during the preparatory stages of Education Policy. Some times it would appear from their observations as if while they were the academic angels providing sagacious leadership in education but only the teachers, the students and educational administrators were not heedful of their wise guidance and selfless wisdom. The

muddle and mess in many educational institutions and programmes that has been made, while paying homage to same ideology or trying to trim their sails to the passing wind, would suffice to expose academic hypocrisy and attempt to rationalise self-interest as public good. Let it not be ignored that with education reform can also be a vested interest in itself and therefore healthy criticism and questioning spirit must pervade it at every stage of the implementation of policy and at different programmes. We may fall prey to self-deception unless there is continuing awareness of goals and possible pit falls. We have to ask ourselves repeatedly as to why so many educational experiments and so many institutions and organisations set up with so much fanfare and great hopes ultimately crumbled into nothingness and disillusionment.

Education is considered as a powerful instrument of change. That is why if the education policy is closely linked with what is our social vision and what are the directions and in which we want the society to move, it will be ultimately rewarding. We may otherwise find that lip service continues to be paid to education as an element of social change but the programmes of many kind of education meet resistance at different levels. Spread of education has an irresistible levelling effect slowly but surely. It generates the spirit of self-confidence in the so called weaker sections and it may be misconstrued as defiance of the powers that be. It has therefore to be properly seen whether the other segments of National Policy also provide and are equipped to respond positively to these potential unsettling effects of any thrust towards a new Education Policy. The place of education in the totality of planning for development—social, political and economic becomes much more relevant to society.

Continuing vigilance and self-assessment can be the only safeguard to any meaningful action programme. It is, therefore, necessary that some of the critical areas like enrolment in schools, the question of drop-outs, the proportion of the girls educated, unconventional methods of teaching and school hours, nonformal education, education for the handicapped, etc. receive realistic attention. For a long time we have been talking of distance education and other ways reaching the students but somehow in the field the non-conventional approaches are always in actuality looked down upon. One finds in school education there is rigidity about the



duration of the course, the prescribed text books, the days of attendance, etc. and there is much less concern about assessing the quantum and quality of education imparted. Somehow we pursue the easy path of going by the traditional and objective indicators. Similarly, we will have to again go into the question of single teacher village schools or institutions as to why they did not succeed earlier; and what must be done to make them succeed now? How can the experiment be made more satisfying for the future? It is not an easy task. Due to the sheer geographical spread and diversity of way of life the implementational aspect becomes very important. This also brings us to the problem of decentralisation in working as well as supervision, guidance and support. At the level of the elementary or primary education this is one of the significant key issues in the education policy.

How can the local institutions be usefully involved? Not only during the formulation of the education policy, but during its implementation an integral view has to be taken. Education cannot be treated as segmented or fragmented for obvious reasons. Education is divided into primary or elementary, secondary, higher, university technical, management education, etc., etc. But the basic linkages will have to be appreciated. Let it be clearly understood that all kinds of education are equally important and so are the persons working in them. It is unfortunate that while we lament that the constitutional directive of the spread of primary education has not been achieved, and pay sympathy to the difficulties of primary education, the field of primary education gets the minimum attention except when the primary teachers get unionised and exert pressure, especially during elections. It is the more articulate and the more influential echelons of education system which seem somehow to monopolise the authority, resources and concepts. A game of alibis starts. The poor status of primary education becomes alibi for those who are responsible for the secondary education. Similarly, the people responsible for higher or secondary education calmly talk about the poor quality of secondary education being mainly responsible for the lack of quality on higher levels. And this peculiar game of alibis seems to pervade the entire system of education. The cohesiveness and coequal character of every stage of education gets ignored. One finds another unfortunate psychological phenomenon which has its distorted impact on the total working of the



educational system. Despite making sanctimonious statements, one finds that university teachers do not necessarily consider the secondary school teachers and primary school teachers as co-partners in the common educational enterprise of and for the people though they may be strong critics of the concept of institutional hierarchy elsewhere. It is unfortunate to find not unoften that the teachers working in the University Department consider their colleagues in the colleges as something less than equal. Hence a frustration among college teachers who complain that they may get the pay of a Reader in the university, but they will not receive that consideration in academic bodies or forums. This percolates to the students though they get the same degrees from the university. The distinction must be based on an individual's worth and not on his place of work and that too of the same kind. This malady has taken another form when the same institutions, including universities consider themselves of much higher quality and significance than other institutions or universities. All this is be passed off in the name of promotion of quality but according to inside critics, is really the attempt at self-perpetuation and self-glorification. An educational policy which aims to cope with the problems of the next century cannot flower or fulfil itself in a stifling atmosphere. This merits conscious attention so that in the context of the lack of resources, certain stages and levels of education and institutions do not remain stunted for all time to come and effort is made that those who are lagging behind for number of historical or unfortunate circumstances, particularly geographical, do get necessary support so that their potential can unfold itself, and the general level of education and institutions all over the country improves. Probably the time has come when mofussil colleges and universities have to be extended discriminatory and equalisation support and the advanced ones may be thoughtfully allowed to exercise, for sometime, self-restraint as regards future expansion. Homage to excellence with pockets of influence and affluence in resources, can otherwise, only serve the rationalisation of the status quo and not the instrument of change, development or reforms.

Education has been called 'investment in man' as well as 'investment in future'. Education is supposed to provide human resources for varying requirements of economy and for different social ends. Personally I am not enamoured of the phrase 'human



resources' in a democratic society. It smacks of manipulation of man to whose dignity democratic system is dedicated. It seems a bit unfortunate to calculate human beings on the same basis as physical resources. Anyway, one need not to go into this sophistry. This is a contribution of management sciences and we must take it as such. It is in this broad spirit that the broad features of the National System of Education have been summed up in the policy document. It is therefore necessary to see while we say that "effective measure will be taken in the direction of the Common School System recommended in the 1968 Policy", it is equally important to identify as to what have been the obstacles so far and how they will be overcome. Similarly, we must analyse how far the common education structure based on  $10 + 2 + 3$  has been effectively implemented and why some of the states have been dragging their feet in its implementation. Again one finds that while it is easy to see that there will be "a common core along with other components that are flexible", experience shows that so far there has been neither common core, nor is there flexibility about components. The common core emerges from a penetrating but consensual perception. 'Flexibility' means purposive and exacting effort, which unfortunately one finds lacking in the present academic environment.

The document on programme of action covers at length problems of early childhood, care and education as well as of elementary education, non-formal education and 'operation blackboard'. The universal provision of facilities and issues of enrolment and retention have been well spelt out. The slow progress of 'operation blackboard' has been widely and frequently commented upon. The whole operation seems mindboggling unless the question of resources and managerial capability are honestly attended to. The new programme of non-formal education is expected to provide education comparable in quality with formal schooling. But here one must be sure first of the quality of formal schooling and then of the public doubt as regards equivalence. Besides the diverse approach for hilly tracts, predominantly tribal areas, urban slums, projects for education of working children etc. mean very detailed work, and one must be clear of the time frame as well as the nature and effectiveness of instructors and of the local community which will act as the watchdog of accountability. The universalisation of primary education poses a formidable challenge to our organisational ingenuity.



The policy envisions wide and varied perspectives for secondary education. The prerequisites and broad parameters of strategy have been envisaged. The widening of access and equalitarian intentions of higher salary with quality approach have been underlined. It is good that the Government have tried to dispel misapprehensions about Navodaya Schools being elitist in nature. But one has to be watchful not only about their not becoming exclusive, but also that their intended quality is maintained. Here also we must recognise that in our milieu of democratic expectations and also due to the imperative need for widening and strengthening of quality in this field in general, the identification of priorities and provision of supportive facilities in the entire field of elementary and secondary education are very important if our society and economy are to develop. The scheme of vocationalisation of education will be dependant on the quality of education. It is thereafter that we have to see the nature, contents, strategy and institutional structure of vocationalisation both by the community (students and parents) and also by the productive centres of the economy. The linkages will have to be worked out. It is an uphill task to be imaginatively performed. Our earlier experiments about multipurpose schools and the like must provide enough of caution and an honest way out. Similarly continuing watch must be maintained about further opportunities for development to the products of the vocational stream.

The education policy visualises education as a key factor in bringing about equality amidst the welter of imbalances which leads to the perpetuation of backwardness of groups of disadvantaged people, especially women, tribal population and those belonging to scheduled castes. This social imperative has to be operationalised and a number of factors and difficulties have been alluded to in this regard and which will merit sustained attention. Equity, equality and quality must be pursued hand in hand. This is important for social progress, economic development and ultimately nation-building. It is a field for pedestrian details, but again calling for both idealism and realism. Another area requiring realistic treatment is that of adult education which has had a very chequered history. The nuances of implications of the concept and programme of adult education must be comprehended in a developing economy. It has very intimate linkage with social education and also programmes for labour and workers. It is an area for social mobilisation, and voluntary agen-



cies. But it can be exploited as honey pot for buzzing flies ! We have to ensure that it does not become politicalised, loosing its moorings. But we must have no illusions that adult education tribal education and all educational programmes for the weaker sections will automatically turn out to be powerful instruments of social awareness in democracy, those in power and with privilege will have to reconcile themselves with this emerging facet of ultimate socio-economic reality.

While defining the role and status of higher education, the policy document expresses the determination "to protect the system from degradation " Besides the promotion of autonomous colleges, provision of infrastructure, modern aids to education, flexibility of courses, regulation of admission, coordinative mechanism, strengthening of research, thrust in new areas of science and technology, delinking degrees from jobs, new pattern of rural university, role of open university, recruitment on merit, etc. are among the more significant suggestions. While laudable by themselves, in operational terms an honest and coherent picture is yet to emerge. It is not the question only of protection from further 'degradation' of higher education. The present status of distressing enough. Many of the hopeful expressions will be no more than pious platitudes, unless the internal working and atmosphere of the universities and colleges improves through joint effort of teachers and the Government. It is neither a question of holier than thou attitude, nor is a game of alibis. For example, for open university system or new rural university stupendous preparatory work is required. The distinction between the courses organised by an open university and through correspondence courses must be made explicit. State Governments are now going in for open universities also. The varied and many models of the past or existing at present will have to be vigorously analysed. Change of nomenclature may not do the magic trick. Besides, the peers must not look upon it as 'inferior' or 'secondary'. We know that affiliating universities, more so the examining universities, are looked down as a poor relative. So is the case with rural colleges or universities. We are not unaware of the psychological complexes that exist between Central and State universities. The Central universities with their resources, opportunities and status do not seem to act as pace setters but as the magnet to a sizeable portion of talent that exists in the mofussil or State universities. It is a



matter for serious consideration as to how the generality of universities can be upgraded systematically and provided greater resources without affecting the present position of better endowed universities, though it is unavoidable that for sometime to come their expansion may not be as fast as it was previously. Probably they may consolidate themselves and thus further add to their quality and search for excellence. But will we be in a position to do so? Will we be able to contain tremendous pulls and pressures in this effort at qualitative democratisation of higher education and bridging of "two worlds" and which exist even more glaringly at other stages and levels of the education system. And one does not know at what end to start, given the constraint of national resources!

One of the suggestions made is the adoption of some sort of "national testing service" with a view to equalise standards for entrance to professional and higher education. Much will depend on how the system is designed and worked in a climate of lack of institutional credibility and increasing recourse to judicial redressal which may not be fully appreciative of quality-consciousness in education. It is heartening to see that some universities are trying to regulate admission through fresh tests of their own. But it is obvious that this attempt to improve or maintain quality will succeed only if credible alternatives, vocational or through delinking of degrees or through self-employment, are worked out. The trouble is that we, with an escapist attitude to meet one situation, refuse to recognise the need for simultaneous working out of complementary and supplementary efforts. A make-believe world of somebody else doing in the name of specialisation, blurs the totality of vision and approach. Of course, an easy escape route and which is lucrative to some, is the suggestion for starting new institutions!

The question of values within the academic profession and teaching community, especially at higher levels, is as important as moral education for children. It is by no means, singling out only the teachers, but here we are discussing specific problems of a particular sector. It is distressing to see that for months together and quite frequently, there is no teaching in colleges and universities on some pretext or other. The young students get cynical and the society gets disenchanted. Strikes take place on any pretext. Agitational politics takes precedence over the interest of the students and the community. The higher scales of pay announced by the Govern-



ment have opened flood gates of controversy with threat of prolonged strike on the horizon. Teachers want to choose what is only palatable to them. The concept of accountability and merit do not seem to be of serious concern. They seem to feel that the society must assume that they think rightly and act rightly, and they be allowed to decide what they rightly deserve without the society raising any questions or laying down any framework for assessment of work as worth. It is not the scenario for the 'essence of education' as contemplated by the education policy document.

The internal working of educational institutions of higher learning, colleges and universities is frequently commented. Reports about general working and also of specific institutions describing the pitiful conditions are many. Unfortunately sustained action has not followed the submission of reports, be it Banaras Hindu University, Aligarh Muslim University or Indian Council of Agricultural Research. Neither research nor teaching can be expected in a vitiated atmosphere of factionalism and favouritism. The marks scandals, favouritism in appointments, the roving Vice-Chancellor who seems to care for every thing that happens anywhere in the world except the problems of his University, the Chancellor who treats the university as his fief for patronage and psychophancy, the ugly scenes in the administrative and academic bodies exerting more to run down the authorities rather than to help them in their legitimate work – all these have ceased to be uncommon and contribute to the lack of respect for and the growing decay of the system. Universities stand for universality of thought, action and behaviour. But not many are immune from even baneful influences of casteism, regionalism and other parochial considerations inbreeding in recruitment ruling out the broad base for intellectual interchange is not considered something undesirable. In spite of growing numbers, limitation of resources and expanding requirements hardly any attention is paid to bring out organisational and administrative reforms in working of offices so that better support from administration may be available to back up the field of scholarship. And unfortunately universities and colleges set example for others in the education system. One is concerned as what will happen when the salt loseth its savour !

Autonomy and accountability must be the guiding stars for colleges and universities. The concepts must be properly understood by all concerned. It is sad to see the Chancellors terminating



tenures of so many Vice-Chancellors and so frequently. The cases between the Chancellors and Vice-Chancellors continue to drag on in the High Courts and the Supreme Court for years leading to denigration and degradation of the education system. It is unfortunate that quite often State Governments treat universities as their tend to dependencies through many checks and balances. They expect that Vice-Chancellors must do their bidding, whether right or wrong. Political self-interest takes precedence over academic proprieties. State financing should mean a sense of accountability and not the expectation of servility. Some states have set up University Grants Commission and College Service Commissions but they do not seem to inspire confidence in the academic community. It is a pity that many a time the State authorities for reasons of their own, do not extend timely and unstinted assistance to prevent widespread indiscipline and turmoil. The Press has reported a few cases where the so called students have started to take contract for works in universities which are not carried out and create trouble for education authorities. In such cases only strong hand of law can only nip the evil in the bud. But State Governments fumble and try to do political bargaining. An honest self cogitation is called for. State must ensure that 'the system works'. But the State must always give due deference to the academic community and provide them necessary support. It cannot be gainsaid that our hope for future lies in the fact that within the portals of the educational world, we have quite a few who can be weighed in terms of gold as they have a dedicated sense of scholarship and social sensitivity. They have to be encouraged and supported. It is this small segment of human resource which has to be developed and optimised for common good. Politicalisation of students and teachers for shortsighted political gains will not do education any good. Teacher politician and politician student both spell doom of any effort at academic improvement and excellence. Both should be shunned as academic saboteurs along with political abettors and collaborators from outside. These may be strong words but we will deceive ourselves if, in an ostrichlike attitude, we continue to overlook a situation on which is desperate and calls for desperate remedies. Self-regulation in education is a product of our hoary tradition. In our variegated history, we have designations for all kinds of today's Ministers and Ministries but none for the Ministry or Minister of Education, since education was deemed to have an

internal discipline of its own. Society will have its watchful eye but should promote consciously in an increasing measure trust in a well designed self-regulatory mechanism sensitive to social urges and needs in the complex world of education. Autonomy and accountability must, thus, acquire a living social significance.

We have a number of high-powered institutions, like the University Grants Commission; National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration; Indian Council of Social Science Research; Indian Council of Historical Research; Sahitya Kala and Sangeet Akademies; All India Council of Technical Education; National Book Trust and many others at the Central level. In states too we find their counterparts and more are being set up. There is need to have a look at their working more than their character. Very often we find legislations to strengthen them. Not glamorous publicity-oriented but solid and steady work is expected of them. They must have some continuing policy and programmes. They are not self-expanding kingdoms, they must act in unison to subserve the aims and objectives of education policy and not just take up adhoc programmes to earn plaudits of some section of populace. A good deal of material exists about possibilities for improved working, but to evade issues always a new committee will be set up. It is a pity that the academic world has not yet felt the impact of the University Grants Commission, as regards either research or quality of education. The college teachers harbour the feeling that autonomous colleges will result in greater handle to management than teachers in working out programmes. NCERT has a vital role to play in the implementation of education policy, in providing guidance to state educational authorities. But is it playing its rightful role? The story is not much different elsewhere. Gimmicks do not work for long. Has it been seen how far the report of the Estimates Committee for its improved performance has been implemented? Even for prestigious schools and in the capital one is told that computers do arrive, but no provision for space, teacher and programme. Is this that we want? These institutions have to be manned by people with academic ability professional competence and intellectual integrity. They have to respond with perception to problems of education as arise and help to solve them with knowledge, firmness and courage of conviction. Coordination both vertical and much more horizontal is called for in the field of education. The Association of Indian Univer-



sities is yet to establish better rapport and greater communication among universities and between universities and governmental authorities. We have many other professional federating all-India bodies besides many organisations and societies as voluntary groups working in limited areas though some of them doing very well. How are they being involved and supported in this big country of ours? Monitoring cannot degenerate into regimentation. But one gets an uneasy feeling that for every problem, without looking into need to strengthen existing institutions, the pet remedy is the establishment of another institution or organisation. This may provide openings to ambitious few or places for some spent-up experts, but only, leads to wasteful conscious of waste of resources. The coordinating capability, professional as well as administrative, of existing institutions and government machinery responsible for the purpose must be optimised. Special mention in this connection must also be made of the U. G. C., Planning Commission and the Central Advisory Board of Education besides the Ministry of Human Resource Development.

It is difficult to go into even briefly about the question of promotion of languages, three language formula, text book preparation, technical and management education, communication as an instrument to inculcate social values, education for secularism or environmental education. Training and retraining of teachers, educational technology, examination reform, preparation of educational administrators, etc. are central to effective implementation of educational policy. It is unfortunate that corruption has in many insidious forms crept in the various wings of the educational edifice and this erodes both merit and faith in the system. Educational administration by itself has become complex. Again is the question linkages at higher levels of education, training and research, science education, legal education, medical education, management and technological education, etc. Even social science from the view point of interdisciplinary approach cannot be ignored. An insightful programme of coordination for fair allocation of resources and achievement of goals set will have to be a continuing effort.

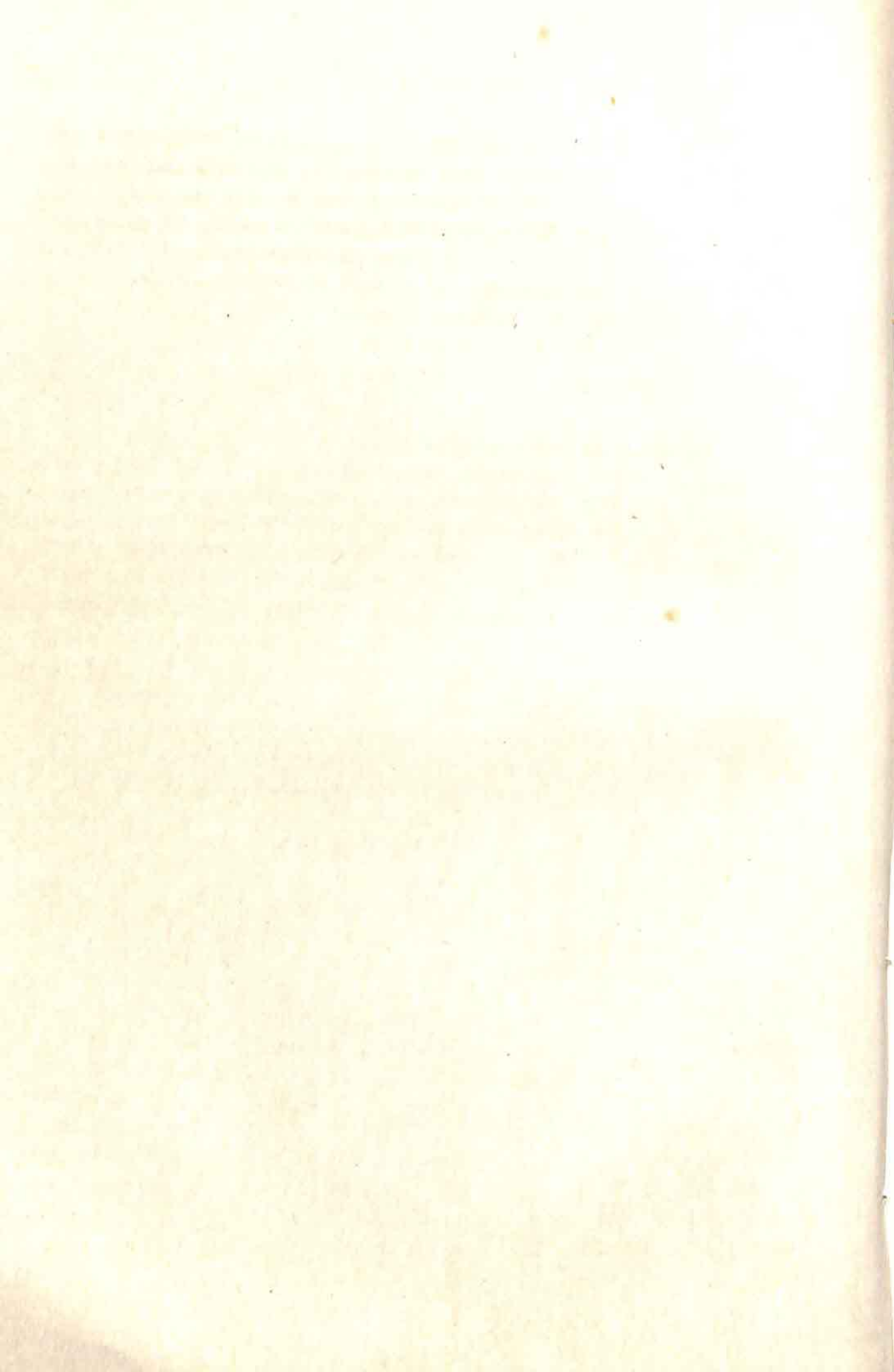
The policy gives recognition to the cultural perspective of education and the need to promote cultural activities. Education is itself a cultural value and also an instrument for promotion of culture. Here also a fairly integrated view will have to be cultivated.

The emphasis will have to be laid on institution building to promote different cultural forms and not just sporadic spectacular shows. In the field of physical education and sports too we have to adopt a similar approach. Besides broader coverage we have to see that 'middle men' who claim to manage sports do not eat away the limited resources. All pains have to be taken to see that sports organisations and institutions are built up on sound foundations so as to take care of the sports in schools and outside. Resources are meant for students' sports and for potential sportsmen and women, and not for managers and their cohorts.

The policy alludes to the multi-faceted role of education in future. In this 'the management of education' and 'resources and review' have a significant and even determining part to play. There is need to avoid all confrontation between the Centre and the States and to evolve the maximum of consensus. States must adopt the same approach in their context. The system of management must be scientific, fair and flexible so as to inspire confidence. The constraint of resources requires optimisation of resources through better coordination and management. Fair allocation of resources for different purposes and ensuring of adequacy of resources for implementation will demonstrate the strength of political will. Appraisal and reviews as part of overseeing and monitoring process are not just catch phrases but fundamental imperatives. Clarity of objectives and continuity of personnel in the Ministry for Human Resource Development and even in the State Governments successfully ensure that the operationalisation of the education policy is on the right lines. The policy document makes lucid references to the availability of books at inexpensive prices and strengthening of libraries. Unfortunately, there has been terrific deterioration. Libraries stand depleted except some specialised or favoured ones. Many institutions like Raja Rammohan Roy Library Foundation, National Book Trust, Book Development Council, etc. are only groping in the dark. Computers and media can replace the book only at the cost of all that education policy stands for in terms of culture, values and civilization. This aspect is suffering for lack of funds as well as clarity of programmes. It is not just a commercial function. Libraries and books, through ages and for the 21st century too, will affirm our faith in powers of the mind in ideas and ideals of man, nay the faith in the future of the nation itself. It will be futile to build up false hopes that



the education policy represents the magic wand or Alladin's lamp for quick production of results. As one who ardently believes that the National Policy on Education is not a compendium of noble abstractions but a positive guidepost for generations to come, the acid test of its efficacy and effectiveness will lie in its unfolding processes of implementation, honest though ostensibly humble.





# Our Present System of Education : Its Relevance and Its Impact

KOMAL KOTHARI

My own field of study is the folk culture of Rajasthan. This is a subject which is not patronised by any department of university education. Now what are the factors which drive a wedge between not only this but a wide variety of other equally absorbing subjects and the recognised disciplines of higher education ? The fact is that our universities follow an academic system which limits itself to a few narrow departmentalised subjects. These recognised departments are like sovereign, and therefore inviolable states. The department of History, for instance, does not want to be related even remotely to any other subject; be it Geography, Sociology or Literature. The same narrowness applies to Geography and, in fact, to all other subjects, howsoever near relations they might have in the same discipline. If co-related subjects within the same faculty have thus become distant neighbours, it is understandable that inter-faculty relations should be almost impossible to establish. Every branch of science is related to its social or human aspect, but the intercourse of different disciplines of study appears to be impossible. The regional study of Chemistry, Geology and Botany etc. is an important part of higher education. It is possible to undertake a sociological or anthropological study of the plants found in Rajasthan. The relationship between Geography and Botany is inseparable and it is desirable that someone should take it up

seriously. But the system of higher education just would not permit such inter-disciplinary researches. This intolerance would have been understandable, and indeed acceptable, if its purpose had been to maintain the purity of the subject. But purity alone does not appear to be the chief aim of our higher education. If you go deep into it, you discover a much more subtle, selfish and petty motive behind it. This is to keep up an exclusive and unobstructed control over the posts that go with a departmentalized subject in a university, and to go on reaping forever the rich harvest that must follow the publication of ever changing text books.

The truth of the above observation will be instantly borne out if you juxtapose our education system and the manner in which appointments are made in a university. I have never been able to understand why a post-graduate in English literature is not allowed to work on subjects related to Indian culture and traditions for his doctoral thesis. Why can't a research on the literary genres of Indian languages be permitted within the periphery of English literature? Why should Shakespeares, Milton, Shelley, Keats and Wordsworth or the works of the modern English writers alone be included in the syllabus of English literature in India? Why can't the translations of the masterpieces of Bengali be part of it? Can't the idioms, proverbs and folk tales of Indian languages be studied through the medium of English? Who prevents an Indian student of English from studying the works of the geniuses of his own country? The colonial slave, who, with all his Ph.D and D.Litt. degrees in English from an Indian University, has failed to get any recognition in England? Why do the powers – that be find it so easy to understand that a research work in English on Indian literature will find a place in the history of the all-important English language? The reason is all too clear: it enriches English literature. They observe that the British and American universities extend substantial facilities to their researchers to work on the great languages and literatures of the world. But they get their degrees from the departments of English only. Here the department of English has been taken only as an example. In fact in all the subjects in our universities an extremely narrow mentality on the part of the authorities frustrates independent and useful research. Consequently there is no difference in the standard of our research work – be it of the M. A., Ph.D. or D.Litt. level. Formerly an M. A. was considered to be qualified to teach in a college; now he must have a Ph.D.



degree at least. But is this Ph.D. worth any bit more than that M. A. ? The answer is a plain and emphatic no. This is just another remification of the existing narrow departmental pattern and, ipso facto, is incapable of giving any new dimension to the education system.

Let us face the stark reality : our university-level education is unlikely to be socially or even academically purposive unless we permit inter-disciplinary studies and research. Human life is a complete organisation of integrated parts, an absolute unity. Man and his knowledge are not separable from each other. Any attempt to put this flowing stream of knowledge into narrow compartments of distinct subjects is bound to fail. To develop the ability to understand the various aspects of man and nature, it is initially advisable to take them up part by part. But only initially, and with the object of enabling the green horns to ultimately recognise the unity of knowledge. The process must not be carried so far as to make them believe that the part is the whole, or more important than the whole. The departmentalized subjects should be treated as the first steps towards knowledge and not as the be-all and end-all of it. It is only after developing the capability of putting together these parts (the various subjects) and visualizing the vastness of life, man and nature that the march to achieve the aim of higher education will begin. Our universities have made the mistakes of defining the subjects that are taught as ends in themselves and have formulated rules to make them appear as such. Our educationists have categorised education as primary, secondary and higher, and have laid down the standards of all these levels; but they have at the same time vanished the aim of all education, namely, knowledge from their purview.

A peculiar quality of human beings, not shared by other animals, is their ability to bequeath to the posterity their knowledge, experiences and memories.

Just as the nine-month long pre-natal conditions for the development of the body are the same for all human beings, so also is the process of acquiring knowledge during the vast span between birth and death. Lispering in childhood; learning the letters and words and arranging them into sentences as part of education while growing up; and the development of the power to acquire knowledge in accordance with the age, are features common to all

mankind. That is why education has been a social institution since times immemorial, even though its principles and the ways and means of imparting it may have changed periodically. But modern education has acquired an 'institutional character' in a different and none-too-happy sense. Your being educated or otherwise, is to be judged not by your knowledge but by a certificate from a school or degree from a university. This development is fraught with grave consequences.

It is against this background that I deem it relevant to relate my experiences of research and the methodology I adopted. I started by collecting the instruments used by the folk musicians of Rajasthan. The things to be considered at the time of collection were the measurements of the instruments concerned, their components, form, and the sonic experiments carried out by the musicians by variation of strings, guts, leather, wood and metal in them. But before long it became clear to me that my study would be deficient till I had understood in depth the players, their ways of learning, the social necessity of playing on a particular instrument and the mutual relationship of the players and their audiences. When I started working in this light, I discovered that different musical instruments have a definite traditional base in the different castes of our rural society. Then I felt that for a deeper understanding of this process it would not be proper to limit my studies to the castes that played these instruments. A partial approach might unfold partial truth only; or what is worse, I might draw totally wrong conclusions. So I must attempt to study the texture of the whole society. This necessitated an in-depth study of the various castes like barbers, carpenters, iron-smiths, gold-smiths, potters and others. On the other hand there was the equally weighty problem of studying the literary, lyrical, metrical and musical quality of the songs sung to the tune of these instruments. I realised now that each instrument had an independent history and an independent social background. In short it was these musical instruments of our villages which led me towards folk tales, pushed me into the cobweb of worldly and religious beliefs about death and inspired me to grapple with the tales of the gods and their creations - all a seemingly endless journey.

The question now arises whether the aim of research is merely to give a descriptive analysis of the subject or something



more serious than this. Can't higher education rise above its present tendency of indulging in drab repetition? Can't it be so formed as to enable us to face and solve the real problems of life?

Be it as it is, one thing became more and more conspicuous with the progress of my work that the present education system, both at the primary and the highest levels, makes our students indifferent to their social and geographical realities, their hereditary experiences, to the elementary requirements of life and what not. It is like cutting off the umbilical cord of an infant, which was his sole source of nourishment before he was born. You start getting proof of it when you get a chance to talk to the so-called uneducated villager. My own area of work has been western Rajasthan. I wanted to know if people can settle upon a way of life without being acquainted with their geographical conditions. Do they have the knowledge of the geography of their region? If they have, how and in what form do they transmit it to their progeny? When I started asking them questions relating to geography, I was pleasantly surprised to find that these so-called uneducated people were thoroughly conversant with every thing concerning their region. Not only could they name and define little known places of Western Rajasthan like *Ghat, Thali, Kotada, Basia, Ma'ani, Khadal, Khabad, Maad, Goolati, Harada, Chitrang, Chautala, Suvalakh*; they could also tell which types of grass, trees & crops did or did not, or could or could not grow there; which animals, whether of superior or inferior breed, were to be found there; at what depth was water to be found and what were its properties. When I attempted to apply this regional division to the whole of Rajasthan I came across words like *Maal, Upermaal, Khairad, Kantha, Goth, Mevar, Pavel, Saira* and *Nala*. Everything described above is known about these areas also. It is this knowledge which furnishes the local population with the means to survive. The cycle of their life over the year reflects the regional geographical conditions.

Once it became necessary to find out what in our traditional society is called disease and what is known as health. We learnt that for them health means the absence of any disease. Health has a negative meaning in their dictionary. Since disease relates to the body I tried to collect the names of the different organs of the human body, in their parlance. I found that they had names for both external and internal organs. And they ran into hundreds even where major parts like the head, the nose, the ears, the hand, the

palm, the paw, the fingers and the nails were concerned. Then we came to the equivalents of the blood, the bones, the heart and the liver. As many as 670 names of the parts of the human body could be collected from these uneducated rustics. A society which can devise so many names for the organs of the body must certainly be able to distinguish and denominate different diseases. So we started collecting the names of diseases. During this process it was discovered that different physical states are or are not considered to be diseases according to the social status of the persons concerned. For the upper class people pregnancy and all that goes with childbirth is a disease. Food given to the mother for a month after the birth of the child must have medicinal properties. But women belonging to the lower classes and tribes it all is nothing more than the natural functioning of the body. Among the upper classes the use of edible oils during pregnancy is strictly prohibited; an expectant mother can consume only ghee. As opposed to this, in the lower classes women in such condition must take oils only and no ghee. Another important fact came to our notice that after the birth of the child it is customary to give the mother spicy food. Thus spices like carum copticum (*ujwain*), dry ginger (*sonth*), turmeric (*haldi*), edible gum, cumin seed (*zira*), coriander (*dhania*) and the bark of *symploc racemoze* (*lodh*) are related to pregnancy and childbirth. This comprehensive knowledge and experience does not reach the society through the medium of a syllabus; it is handed down through a process of oral communication and social intercourse. Our syllabus oriented education system does not recognise any such accumulated knowledge.

I made a similar attempt to understand their knowledge of vegetation. Not only did I find a broad classification like trees, plants, bushes and creepers, but also a philosophy behind why they were so classified. There were a couple of persons in every village who could identify thousands of varieties of vegetation. These people embodied a whole tradition of specialization in the field. This more than ordinary knowledge had not descended upon them from nowhere - they had shifted and filtered it from the customs and traditions of their society.

In our country the job of performing certain functions has been entrusted to certain castes. These castes specialise in their jobs are a sort of reservoir of knowledge in that field. Castes like *Khatris*



(carpenters), *Lohars* (iron-smiths), *Sonars* (gold-smiths), *Kumbhars* (potters), *Bharavas*, *Kolis*, *Raigers* (cobblers), *Chheenpas* (fibre-printers), *Jingars* (people who use tanned leather), *Duboars*, and *Darzis* (tailors) fulfil the needs of the rural society with their technical knowledge and experience. They never went through a systematic course in a university. The purpose here is not to launch into a detailed analysis of the scope of the knowledge of these people and its necessity for the existence of the rural society; every member of this society already knows it. But what is not known to many is how deep this knowledge goes in some cases. Take the example of the *Niharias*, a people who lies around goldsmiths. It is they who annually buy up the junk of the goldsmiths' shops for anything between a few hundred to sixty thousand rupees. They have acquired the skill to separate one metal from the other. They can blend and also separate different metals like gold, silver, tin and copper. This chemical processing has been going on in our villages for centuries. Of course it has been the preserve of a small class. But the point is that our unlettered rural folks have had the ability to perfect their experience into a system and transmit them to the posterity. Another instance of the application of chemistry is to be found in the fabric printing of the *Chheenpas*. Their methods of manufacturing colours from minerals and vegetation are unfortunately being lost.

It will not be out of place here to discuss the traditional system of education also. People in their forties will still recall it vividly. The corner-stone of this system was the art of committing to memory. Young children were taught their alphabet and tables through the musical method of 'chanting' them. Then came the new principles of education in the form of the kindergarten and Montessori systems. They maintained that cramming is burdensome in the initial stages of education; that knowledge should be imparted to a tender mind through games. But it was found to be impracticable. There was no alternative to learning by heart. All that the new experiments succeeded in doing was making education so expensive as to put it beyond the reach of the common people. The old system was brought to the brink of extinction without due trial. Is it so very difficult a point to understand that a child should find it an enjoyable experience to 'sing' his grammar and mathematics (two of the most unattractive subjects) into memory? He was not confronted with the script till he had learnt to articulate properly and by heart. It was only after perfecting this art that the script was gently intro-

duced. All the images used in the system were from the natural and social environment of the child. Thus it not only aimed at teaching him to read and write; it also made an indirect attempt to awaken the child's awareness of his surroundings. And yet it was discarded. An in-depth study of this rejection brought to light the chilling fact that education has throughout history been manipulated to safeguard the vested interests of the prosperous. The bulk of society was deprived of the privilege of education through a conspiracy. A study of the inter-relations of the various castes will expose how the Brahmins were not interested in educating all and sundry. So they created an atmosphere in which it would appear very natural for the poor to remain uneducated, so much so that they should not even desire to get it. At the same time the aims of the traditional methods were studiously discarded. Most young students today fail in mathematics. It is because the subject has been divested of its practical use and is being taught in an abstract form. Our traditional arithmetic had a two-fold social purpose that of fulfilling the requirements of the business community, and that of teaching the Brahmins to determine the dates of important festivals and prepare horo-scopes. The fact that emerges from this is that children can be encouraged to study a dry subject like arithmetic only if they can see its relevance to day-to-day life. Abstract figures can never achieve this.

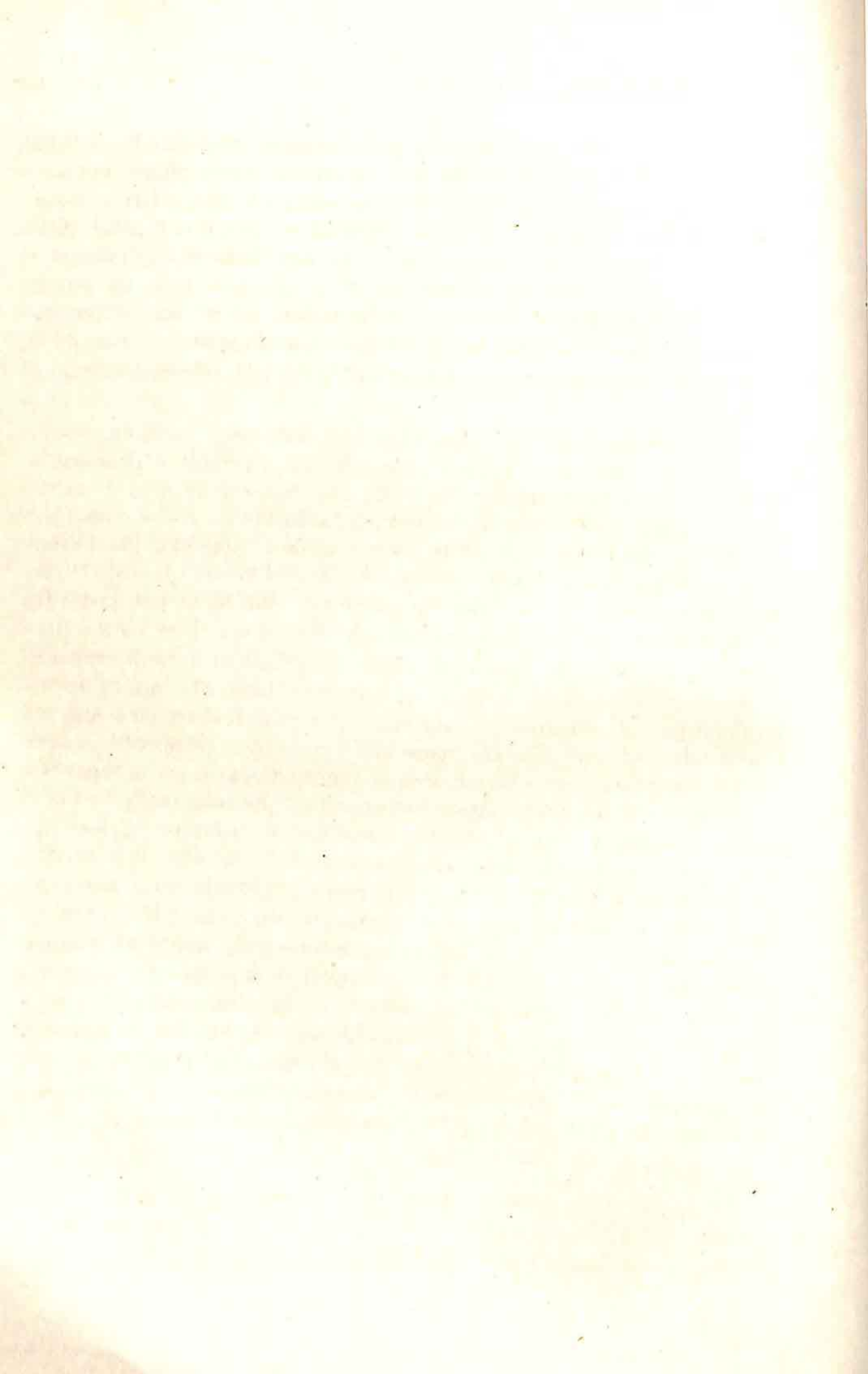
It might be argued that the above mentioned subjects have nothing to do with higher education, that they end at the primary level. But the truth is otherwise. The glory, power, comprehensiveness, in fact the very structure of the Indian society, rests on these subjects. We shall have to discover at the highest levels of research all that is relevant to the process of the development of the common man. It does not mean discarding the scientific knowledge of the West : that would be suicidal indeed. Any attempt to insulate our national culture will result in choking it to death. But at the same time we cannot ignore the truth that a culture is like a tree born to the land. Left these it will grow, flower and fructify ; torn from these it will die out. But then no alien tree will be able to grow there-the land will be foreign to it. This balance between the national and the wider human culture has been maintained over countless centuries.

The highest system of education in our country has yet to acquire the capacity to really impart knowledge, which is the real goal of all education. Education by itself is just a medium. Knowledge



is indivisible whereas a system of education is phased. If it can enable a man to realise that he is a part of the atmosphere, environment and culture of his land ; if it can arouse in him a fierce desire to dig out the lost elements of his national culture, it is fruitful. What our present system of higher education has done is to shake us at the roots, to put our consciousness of a glorious past to a deep sleep. It has bred in our minds a contempt for all our indigenous knowledge, a sickly repugnance for the natural modes of social life. Hence our constant preoccupation with a socially relevant system of education.

It is beyond me to see how the university senates, syndicates, research boards, syllabi, examinations, examiners, professors, readers, research facilities, the UGC, the State governments or the Central government can find a practical solution to these questions. I carry out my research work independent of a university. But I know that a revolutionary change is urgently needed in what is dished out as research work by the Indian universities. We have got to get rid of the narrow and crippling framework within which alone the present system permits research. The necessity of interdisciplinary research must be impressed on the minds of those who are in throttling charge of sovereign subjects. The new researchers are no doubt talented, but they are made ineffectual by a group of teachers with a vested interest. These people adamantly wish to be regarded as 'gurus', but are not prepared to shoulder the responsibilities of a 'guru'. A 'guru', i.e. a real teacher is not just a professor by designation; his job is to make the disciple aware of the totality, the thirst for truth and knowledge. If the existing system of education can produce in the professors a genuine desire to do research, to realize their intellectual powers as well as limitations and, above all a sense of detachment; than certainly a welcome change is round the corner. Let it be clear here that neither politicians nor bureaucrats have anything to do with any of the problems I have raised in this long essay. They are not the arbiters of the technical aspects of education, it is the professors. What we have to be vigilant about is the politics of the universities which has robbed our education of its glory.





# Women's Education in India : Some Basic Issues

P. D. SHARMA

Adult suffrage and mass education are the twin revolutionary factors to which Indian society has now been exposed for the first time in its age-long history. The former implies the availability of the latter and it has rightly been contended that the latter alone can sustain the former. Caught in the midst of typical compulsion of democracy and development, a developing country like India does not seem to have much choice in dealing with the dilemma of providing mass education with very little inputs in terms of financial priorities. When the education budgets in the Five-Year plans were somewhat lower than the desirable minimum, the political pressure brought upon the representatives, resulted in an aimless quantitative expansion of education with an inevitable and obvious sacrifice of quantitative contents and standards. Even in this when the men's education has touched 39.49 per cent, the 1971 census puts this figure for women's education as low as 18.47 per cent.

While talking about women's education in India, one cannot afford to ignore the basic concept of that role which Indian society expects its womanhood to play. Since time immemorial, the orientals and especially the Hindus, have evolved a distinct culture with its characteristic traits of marriage and family patterns. This cultural *ethos* evolved from certain basic religious and philosophical

values of life, posits woman in a role so very different from her counter-part in the west. The edict of Mānu that father protects her in the childhood, husband maintains her in her youth and the son helps her in the old age, puts the Hindu woman under the overprotectionism of family based on sacramental marriage. Manu writes\* :

*“Pita rakshiti Caumara Bharta rakshiti Yovna  
Putro rakshiti Vardhakya na istri Swatantramarhti.”*

The medieval period enhanced this concept of overprotectionism still further and she was regarded as personal property causing all kinds of litigations. The Englishman brought up in a different culture, soon realised that for their limited purpose of imperialistic exploits, they need not disturb the traditional pattern. On the contrary, they rather encouraged it by giving absolutely no thought to women's education. They did open schools, colleges and universities, but little did they care whether Indian woman was being really educated and trained to mother a future society with democratic values of life.

In the post-independence era the challenges have been so numerous and enormous that one can scarcely blame the economic planners for the imbalance or rather absence of cultural planning. The democratic experiment, coupled with a gradual expansion of the educational base, has created an urge in Indian families to educate their daughters, but the planners and administrators of education in the country have devoted little thought whether the schemes of mass education among women-folk should be duly designed or just left to be fitted in the overall existing pattern of available institutions. Faced with the problem of mass entry into an elitist system of higher education, the thought for optimum use of resources has become so obsessive that the uniqueness and the vitality of women's education had failed the comprehensibility of our planners. The false notions of democratic equality, further encouraged by a vapid talk of co-education, have created a situation in which one finds the remedies turning into deeper sources of maladies.

\* “पिता रक्षति कौमारे भर्ता रक्षति यौवने  
पुत्रो रक्षति वार्धक्ये न स्त्री स्वातन्त्र्यमर्हति”



The existing system of higher education for women, to my mind, is a thoughtless continuation of the past, leading to an appalling problem of national dimensions. It is neither designed to produce right kind of career women nor has it produced the ideal type of house-wives, which seem to the *sine quo non* of education for most of the educated women in India today. The elitist education with very little or no vocational bias has rendered the educated women-folk crippled or disillusioned without much prospects in the family or in the office. On the one hand, it turns out a large chunk of unemployed or rather unemployable mass of women desperately and somewhat irrelevantly competing with men in odd professions, on the other hand it produces merely literate housewives with somewhat false notions of vanity and wasteful consumption. It neither prepares the educated women for bread-earning, nor equips her with the requisite knowledge so very necessary for intelligent womanhood and affectionate family care. Like Men's education, it has woefully failed to train intellect and discipline emotions conducive to creative contributions and social advancement. On the other hand it creates a peculiar situation, in which a university degree becomes a pass-port for marriage and many of the university colleges have to do the baby-sitting till the family negotiates the settlement. One meets hundreds of such young educated girls on a university campus who are desirous to take second or third M. A.'s and collecting irrelevant diplomas because they have nothing else to do at home. Several of them can be seen resenting that passing the examination will render their lives drab and less exciting. The young energies being wasted with little care for the aptitude and the concomitant results, can be seen in the over-production of mis-fits, with no idea whatsoever of a happy, decent and meaningful life.

Obviously, the system of women's education should be tied up with the future patterns of a country's economy and family life system. It must take into account the processes of modernisation, industrialisation and the replacement of old values in the wake of an emerging new socio-economic order. Plato in his celebrated Republic has laboured this point very well. He maintains that educational curricula should be an outgrowth of the objectives which the system targets to achieve. A clear perception of the objectives and a priority listing of them, can yield us the desired curricula

reforms in the light of the tremendous social change that has taken and is fast taking place in free India.

To me it appears that women's role in any society has certain eternity and universality. A particular culture may inhibit a few things here and there, yet her role has been basically what Nature has intended it to be. In the present context of things in India one can see three kinds of educated women in the country.

In the first category there are exclusively career women who for their own reasons, prefer to stay single and wish to devote their higher talents and educational accomplishments to the vocational and/or creative purposes, economic or artistic. In the second category there are those who like to combine a career with the simultaneous functioning of a housewife, and thereby fulfil a double role, as house-wife-cum-career-woman. Then, there is the third category of the exclusive housewife, who uses her educational experience and personality development as a whole-timer to the pleasure and welfare of her family, joint or otherwise.

These categories are not neat and may have all kinds of variations in the continuum. Yet, I think, a very purposeful scheme of curricular reform can be drawn, if these three categories of educated women in future India, are clearly envisaged and hypothetically accepted by the planners of our education.

To work out precise curricula for these three categories, is certainly a matter of details, but must obviously be regarded as a worthwhile exercise in view of its national significance. No body can deny that any curricula designing must keep the personality of the pupil and objectives of the system within the frame of institutional limitations of a given period of history. Like any other kind of education, women's education in India has to pursue these broader objectives of

1. Personality development,
2. Career preparation,
3. Role training, and
4. Creative and material advancement of society.

My feeling is that in India, for a fairly long time to come, the third category of the exclusive, housewife will remain preponderant for various reasons. The pace of economic development and the social change, will gradually cause a mass exodus from this



third category of exclusive housewife to the second category of housewife cum-career woman. When these two categories will form the bulk, the first category of exclusive career woman, notwithstanding their numbers, has to be recognised as a very significant category by the educators of the country. The Education Commission visualises that by 1985 the total enrolment in the national system of education would rise from 70 million in 1965 to 170 million in 1985. Educational expenditure would rise during the same period from Rs. 6,000 million in 1965 to Rs. 40,000 million in 1985. The proportion of national income devoted to education would rise from 2.9 per cent in 1965 to 6 per cent in 1985. To work out a model plan for the curricular reform in women's education for the Indian society of the coming 90s, here are some nuclear thoughts, which I would like to present for reflections and academic discussions. This may yield a more complete and problem solving model for the three categories of educated women, envisaged and expected to arrive on the campuses of the country in the coming decades.

### CAREER WOMAN

This category of educated woman has to be of an intellectual variety. As they aspire for a high quality of mental life and top careers, they have to be prepared intellectually as well as vocationally, for higher responsibilities, absolutely at par with men. For example, those educated women who want to compete for the I. A. S. or for the teaching and research positions in the universities or senior journalistic positions or careers in medicine, engineering or pure science, may continue to study the advanced academic courses prescribed by the university faculties. Since these careers make rigorous demands and expect a whole-time devotion of a specialist the distinction on the basis of sex has to be ignored. Unburdened with encumbrances of a family, such women can be asked to devote more time and extra energy to educational pursuits. As they willingly and volitionally opt to stay as career women, they have to work shoulder to shoulder with their men folk. Hence, the curricula for the education of such women should exactly be the same as for men. They must be forced to study in co-educational institutions, with more and more emphasis on intellectual training and corporate life. Like Plato's Philosopher Kings, their curricula

should give them a rigorous training – mental as well as physical and they must specialise in science or liberal arts or technology. Here, I think, the existing curricula of university education should be the same for men and women and such women alone should go to the universities.

#### CAREER-CUM-HOUSEWIFE

The members in this category will mount in future for obvious compulsions of developmental economy and an urge not to allow education go waste. Educated women in this category will not like to accept whole-time jobs, nor will they be content with mere bearing and rearing of children as their sole vocation after marriage.

Circumscribed by the limits of family tradition, and household responsibilities, they will like to use their education to supplement the inadequate pay packets of their middle class future husbands in their leisure hours and especially when they are in their forties and onwards. For these women the courses should be so tailored that while studying the job oriented university subjects from Natural and Social Sciences and Humanities, they may have an equally free option to choose from useful feminine subjects, like Home Science, Planned Parenthood, Medicine for the Mothers, Maternity Care, Interior Decoration, Gardening, Typing, Tailoring etc. These courses specially useful for a housewife's career, may be given equal weightage for the degree examination, and the candidate should be able to use these subjects for the university degree, no matter they seem some-what unorthodox in the total pattern. Curricula for these kinds of young women, have to be within the existing frame, so that they may earn a livelihood or fetch a part-time job or pursue a lucrative vocation at home or outside, with the help of that degree and educational experience. But as these women are going to be primarily housewives, courses pertaining to House Management, Motherhood, Cookery, Child Psychology, Creative Arts, Crafts during leisure etc. have to be provided with high academic standards and rigorous teaching, to university degree.

#### EXCLUSIVE HOUSEWIFE

It is in this category that a major break-through is required



in the concept of education itself and especially in the realm of curricula design. Notwithstanding its financial implications, I feel, it is in this category that women's education has to be really feminine, purpose-oriented and innovative. Perhaps it is not possible to have these innovations in the existing set-up of Boards of Studies and faculties of the Indian universities. Crippled with a deadening weight of uniformity and rigid administrative control over curricular design, it is almost unworkable to educate these exclusive housewives. In this connection the Education Commission has observed: it is an urgent need to introduce flexibility and innovation in the organisation of courses for the Master's degree. The curricula should be framed as to provide a general broad-based course or intensive training in one or two special fields. In a country where women's education is so appallingly low, it looks criminal to talk out of context and stress upon mere standards, and deny women the access to knowledge which is quite convenient and possible today without a huge and cumbersome administrative machinery for the award of degrees and divisions. In this category women of all age groups have to be covered. And this kind of education has to be a mixed concept of higher literacy, vocational training, citizenship orientation, adult education and awareness of changing environment around. I envisage that women in this category should be educated through a well thought out and scientifically organised system of autonomous colleges. In United States the experiment of autonomous colleges has resulted in a very healthy competition among these educational institutions, leading to a steep rise in academic standards. These colleges preserve their distinctness and uniqueness and attract their pupils on the basis of their reputation, as institutions of innovation and creative scholarship. This experiment can immediately begin from our present day exclusive women's colleges. These colleges should offer their own courses and grant their own college degrees. They should not be impaired by irrelevant and nasty rules about attendance, stereotyped prescribed text-books, three-hour annual examinations, and the most absurd system of failing the candidates for one full year and that too sometimes with little fault of these students. The salient features of this curricula model for the education of future housewives in India must have four characteristics :

1. It should be flexible.
2. It must be conducive to creativity.

- 3 It must engender experiment.
4. It must yield useful and meaningful purpose.

Like American university and college systems the curricula for these women's autonomous colleges should be left to their teachers. In the United States, the educational courses are listed in the syllabi of the institution numerically. Every course carries certain credit. Courses having numbers above 100 or 150 are advanced courses and the teacher can use them as core courses for those who want to collect credits for the degree. These courses also have a sequence and every teacher who offers a course gives the outline of the curricula he plans to teach for the coming Semester. These listings are revised, according to requests or demands by the faculty. Women students in all age-groups should take these courses according to their needs or aptitudes. The courses might be taught in various ways, spread over several semester or quarters as desired by the respective teachers. The system may have two kinds of students—formal and informal.\* The formal students may be asked to complete some core requirements of studying certain courses and maintaining certain academic standards in their grade sheets for the candidacy of their degrees. The informal students may just attend the classes and leave their studies whenever they like—with or without grade evaluations by their respective teachers. In these colleges some major subjects from Social Science disciplines and Humanities should be offered, but a three-year course in Indian History or Political Theory may be relevantly and condensely spelled out by the teacher to be taught in a period of six months as per requirements and receptivity of the pupils. General and specialised courses may be linked up. For instance, a general course on 'Planned Parenthood' may have sub-courses on (a) Family Planning, (b) Motherhood and delinquency, (c) Child diseases, (d) Educational care of the Child, (e) Recreational needs of Children, (f) Child and Neighbourhood, (g) Impact of sex relations on child psychology, (h) Parenthood and Parent relationship etc.

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\*These informal students in U. S. are called Auditors. In this category one finds senior citizens, especially women and war veterans, teachers of sister departments advanced students or researchers. Housewives of various categories coming to the University campus, sitting with the teenagers and submitting to the classroom discipline, but not working for a degree. These out of the examination students are regular students in every respect, except that they do not work for the specific requirement of the degree prescribed by the teachers and the graduate schools



These courses being diverse and open, have to be designed fresh every time and may have additions or drop-outs in proportion to their popularity and long range needs, projected in the context of social dynamics and levels of modernisation experiment. In America some of these courses are called sandwich courses. They are generally offered during summer vacations, in which an eight-week quarter covers as much instruction and study as is normally covered in a four-month quarter period. Through this kind of curricula an instant or capsuled-type of education may be imparted and housewives, who do not need academic degrees anyway, can be made to participate in an educational experience of great creative value and practical utility. A vast majority of girls that leave school at 14 would be benefitted by short vocational courses or by courses in Home Science which would help them in their future life. These need greater emphasis than a mere continuation of general education. (*Refer* – Report of the Education Commission, 1964-66 Government of India, Delhi, 1966 p. 176.)

The reform model outlined here has certain positive and tangible plus points. It does not throw away the entire system overboard, and is radical only in those harmless areas where it is not going to have serious repercussions, specially in the employment market. Apart from this feasibility, the scheme is relevant because it can handle students manifold more in numbers for admission to colleges within the existing budgets. It is also significant for its experimental value. It seeks to deviate from the stereotyped dead patterns of Boards of Studies, too timid to innovate and too much past oriented to look forward. It takes care of some of the socio-economic problems of the transition of the Indian Society and goes a long way to accelerate the processes of modernization by exposing larger number of women and their future families to a variegated experience of purpose and value. The bane of the Indian educational system has been its dull-uniformity awards of degree and divisions for white collar jobs and creativity killing patterns of examinations, based on distrust and mistrust. To get rid of them, women's education is the right field to experiment without much money and the least possible risk of major dislocation of the total system. A classical example of this is Prof. Desai of Bombay who maintains: "A good teacher never fights with the syllabus. Everyone wants to work less. They want short-cut methods. The urge to know is wanting." (*Illustrated Weekly of India*-The School Teacher

Number-June 20, 1971, p. 10). I absolutely disagree with him. My feeling is that a good teacher may be ruined by the rut syllabus, everybody wants to work less only because the work is not creative. Short-cut methods are wanted only to avoid monotony. The urge to know can never be wanting, so long as one is intellectually alive. Moreover, it links the curricula with the role and objectives of Women's education in modernising society experimenting with a synthetic concept of modernity of tradition.

Needless to say that any meaningful talk of reforms in any area of educational experiment in India, will have to combine the western experience with Eastern legacies. The Kothari Commission (Report of the Education Commission 1964-66) Government of India, suggests the following strategy.

"In our opinion the strategy for the development of the education of girls and women will have to take two forms. the first is to emphasise the special programme....and the second is to give attention to the education of girls at all stages and in all sectors as an integral part of general programme for the expansion and improvement of education." (*Report of the Education Commission 1964-66, p. 138.*)

Besides being an academic experience, education has to be a cultural experience also. The women folk of a country basically represent the latter. Hence, while tailoring the curricula for women's education in a modernising society like India, it will be pertinent to keep the various roles of women in view. The curricula designed to produce the right kind of housewife, capable of achieving much more in other walks of life, will be a rational exercise with a purposeful design. In order to be a gratifying experience for the individual, and simultaneously a useful and enriching activity for the society, educational curriculum for women's education on India have to be taken up as the seeds with the famous dictum : "As you sow, so shall you reap."



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|  | Enrolment of Girls-(Total in 000's) |         |         |         |
|--|-------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
|  | 1950-51                             | 1955-56 | 1960-61 | 1965-66 |
| Primary Classes :                                | 5,385                               | 7,639   | 11,401  | 18,145  |
| Secondary Classes :                              | 163                                 | 320     | 541     | 1,069   |
| University Stage :                               | 40                                  | 84      | 150     | 271     |
| (No. of girls for every<br>100 boys enrolled.) : | 14                                  | 17      | 23      | 24      |

*See*, Report of the Education Commission 1964-66, p. 136, Government of India, Delhi, 1966.
3. Yojana (Eng.) June 13, 1971, p. 23.
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5. *See* Naik, J.P., Educational Planning in India, Allied Publishers, Bombay, 1965.
6. Dialogues of Plato-Republic Book III.
7. *Refer*, Report of Education Commission, Government of India, Delhi, 1966. p. 139.
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11. *Refer*, Society, Schools and Progress in India : John Sargent, 1968, London, Pergamon Press.

12. Principal Lansey Rodricks of St. X'viers High School Bombay has said that, "He would prefer a course, which, while maintaining uniformity at the core allows scope for experimentation." See, *Illustrated Weekly of India*—The School Teacher Number—June 20, 1971, p. 10
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14. For details, refer, *Indian Women Through the Ages* : P. Thomas, Bombay, Asia Publishing House, 1964.
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# New Education, New Technology & New Social Order

K. L. KAMAL

The non-formalists are the real revolutionaries who seem determined to face the new challenge of linking the University with the community in the wake of the developing awareness for more information in every sphere of life. The traditional elitist concept of education is being found inadequate to meet the challenge arising out of the changing social, political and economic order. Correspondence instruction was discovered, in the new process, as a direct outcome of the social urge for education consistent with aspirations of the democratic polity. It is based on the philosophy that anything which can be learnt in a regular class room can equally be learnt from correspondence. Correspondence as a viable instrument of instruction has been legitimized both in the affluent and developing nations of the world. This system has immensely helped the common man, with his in-built limitations, to have an access to higher knowledge and has silently accelerated the process of social change.

## CONCEPT AND APPROACHES

Different concepts and approaches to the study of the problems of distance education has been developed in both the developed and developing countries. A few examples may be cited. In Indonesia a Directorate of Community within the working sphere of

Ministry of Education & Culture organises mass education for Indonesian citizens. There were as many as 10,266 people's Libraries set up in Indonesia for the dissemination of knowledge to the mass. Such efforts have also been made by the small countries like Ceylon. Adult literacy, functional literacy and community development are integrated in the rural development programme sponsored by the Government. It is fascinating to note that even the political parties in Ceylon organise their adult education services and trade unions for their study circles.

The largest Dutch College, Leidsche Onderwijsinstellingen of Leiden, which imparts both technical and non-technical courses at all levels includes facilities for oral tuitions at one-day sessions on Saturdays for almost all its courses.

Another large Dutch correspondence college Nederlands Schriftelijk Studiecentrum (N.S.C.C.) offers a wide range of non-technical, vocational and general education courses, is housed in a Church and the directorial staff are members of the priesthood. In West Germany there is a considerable diversity of practice. The largest college H.F.L. (Hamburg), theorises that correspondence is an 'autonomous' form of education and that if oral tuition is used to supplement it, 'a foreign element' is brought into the method. Although most of the developing and developed countries have made rapid strides in launching the non-formal systems of education on a massive scale, yet it is not out of context to add that China has taken a lead by establishing Radio and Television Universities.

Most of the Institutes of correspondence studies combine variety of techniques to make the system more viable and effective, e.g. the Institute of Correspondence Studies, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur, not only sends reading material to the students but also organises week-end classes at places where the concentration of students is large, evaluates students response sheets, and organises personal contact programmes. Library facilities have also been provided where there is larger concentration of students.

The Committee on Correspondence Courses and Evening Colleges appointed in 1961 by the Ministry of Education in its report says, 'Indeed, the opinion is held that under the correspondence method it is possible for persons with concentration and discipline to become better instructed and educated graduates than those at present produced from some affiliated colleges'. The



evidence in favour of correspondence instruction is summed up in an article in the Encyclopaedia of Educational Research. It says that 'with reference to Correspondence work, the research shows that the marks in home-study courses are generally higher than in similar courses in residence; the difference between the performance in residence classes of students who had only previously earned credits in home study and those who had only residence work was in favour of the home study group'.

### OPEN UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

It facilitates access for the less privileged, education through access courses and economically through conventional work and study arrangements which make access viable. Open University provides courses in cooperation with its students. Today the main activity has changed from the passing of knowledge to the passing on of the culture, passing on of the culture to the extending of knowledge and now to teaching and life time learning. The Open University system is a consequence of the fact that this is indeed anti-thesis of elitist and the closed system. Open higher education is available to all.

**Ingredients of Open University system :**

1. *Open Philosophy and Policy :*

The open educational policy is to open the door of higher education to all who desire to seek for the truth and happiness through education.

2. *Open Admission :*

This feature means that all people who have the minimum qualification are admitted to the institution.

3. *Open Campus :*

It means that it is optional for the student to come to attend the class or to study at home or the combination of both. In fact it is off-campus study programme.

4. *Open Instruction :*

This means that active instruction by instructors is optional. The educational materials are designed for self-instruction.

5. *Open learning :*

This means that students at an educational institution have the freedom to learn whenever they have time or mood to study.

6. *Open Media :*

The programmes can be offered in all kinds of educational and mass media. We may particularly mention the following media.

- a) Audio tapes and texts
- b) Television
- c) Close-circuit T.V.
- d) National and Local Radios
- e) Regional Study Centres
- f) Video Tapes

7. *Open Opportunity :*

This type of education offers life long educational programme by giving an opportunity to the masses to receive higher education or extension services at any time of their life.

8. *Open Programmes :*

Educational programmes are usually very broad and open to the public through mass media.

9. *Open Evaluation :*

This system offers various techniques of open evaluation.

10. *Open for life and for the masses :*

- a) This system aims at education for the development of peaceful mind and personality,
- b) Education for the development of life and work,
- c) Education for the development of the Community,
- d) Education for the development of the masses.

## EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY

We have seen during the past decades the emergence of a hybridization of such diverse fields as electronics and electrical engineering, information, communication, organisation and cyber-



netic theory, broadcasting (radio and television) psychology, teaching and curriculum theory which may be in the form of educational technology. Now modern technology includes INSAT 1B satellite and computer aided teaching facilities.

Whereas an educationist is mainly concerned with the optimization of human life through the objective and subjective organisations of learning, a technologist is primarily concerned with the setting of viable system for the attainment of specified goals. The technologist therefore, is one who conceives and develops technological systems and termed as such an educator, the engineer, the system analyst, the communication consultant, the computer specialists, and instruction designer, class room teacher and all such persons are technologists.

Technology for distance education, if viewed comprehensively may also include media offering mass distribution of messages such as newspapers, magazines and periodicals, radio or television, public learning centres, like galleries, theatres, libraries, museum, psychotherapy, Yoga etc. and personal learning, resources, such as audiovisual recording, play-back stored devices etc. It may be calculated that there exist enormous opportunities for developing the non-formal education system, which is much less expensive and much more rewarding, academically and numerically. A thoughtful scrutiny of our consideration of the problems and prospects of distance education would unmistakably lead us to the conviction that there exist a strong need for new forms of educational technology to be widely dispersed. In case it is done we would come across persons with high intellectual aptitude and commitment to work for the cause which in itself is both a mission and a profession. It is high time that educational technology is liberated from its primitive basement and geared-up for wider cause based on scientific lines.

The electronic revolution<sup>1</sup> has made it possible to impart education at a reduced cost to a large population, which is not able to participate in the formal system of education and therefore, the national agencies should recognise this potency of new technology while making allocations. All efforts should be made at the national,

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1. Based on the recommendations of Seminar on "NEW TECHNOLOGIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION" under the joint auspices of UGC and AIU, Poona, Jan. 9-11, 1984.

institutional, regional levels for the creation and strengthening of facilities in the extension of new technologies. More and more audiovisual centres, resource centres and educational media research centres be created in Universities where correspondence instruction is provided. The funding agencies should support and strengthen these centres in order to develop them into viable nuclei of training, research and development, materials production and extension activities. The research centres should start short-term and long term training programmes and efforts be made to launch realistic research projects both for hard-ware and soft-ware for utilisation and up-gradation of new technologies for higher education. All centres of distance education be provided a microprocessor computer with a CPU, floppy disk drive (1MB formatted capacity), magnetic disk drive (10 MB formatted capacity) with a fast printer and dot matrix printer possibly with 3 terminals, (2) a VCR with a Monitor (Projection TV) capable of showing video programmes to students (single unit upto 1000 students, multiple units for increased students strength).

There is need to reserve a separate TV transmission channel exclusively for educational purposes. For the purpose of software and hardware projection multidisciplinary team of experts and specialists in education, language and media technology should be formed for re-orientation and training and materials production. The Central and the State Governments, University Grants Commission and other funding agencies should make efforts available for developing educational technology in higher education.

#### **LOBBYING FOR NEW EDUCATION, NEW TECHNOLOGY NEW SOCIAL ORDER**

The availability of new educational technology would usher in an era which would bring a total revolution as access to scientific knowledge technology and rich information relating to various walks of life would lead to social transformation. Under-privileged sections of the society, which have been denied education because of poverty, ignorance and other inbuilt compulsions would now come up as vigilant, conscious mass of population struggling, striving for partnership in decision making process. Education then would no longer be the monopoly of the few and a microscopic minority of population, which so far has dominated the rest of the vast



segments of the society, would thus be prevented from doing so. Education whether it is at the lower level or the higher level would not only be qualitatively superior but would also be within the reach of the common man. You need not abandon the work in hand for coming to the seat of learning, it would be the other way round. Education would be provided at your door step, your bed-room and drawing-room would also become your class-room. Television, radio, video, audio-casset and other instruments of learning become your constant companions. The 21st century would belong to the non-formalists, since the formal education seems to have outlived its utility. Most of the students, most of the time, are off the campus and it is difficult to prove that the teachers identify themselves with the campus. The violent demonstrations, strikes, hartals, gheraos clearly indicate that the cracks in the formal system have been widened incurably. Undoubtedly, the future belongs to the non-formalists, but for this what is required is lobbying.





# Quality in Higher Education

P. N. MUTHIAH

There is a perennial complaint about education that education in India is in the doldrums and that there are innumerable dropouts; that there is no proper return to the investment, that the courses at the universities are not relevant to the needs of the society, that the syllabi are outdated and obsolete, that the courses seldom promote creativity. To encapsulate these criticisms the general outcry is that there is a fall in standards in education in general and higher education in particular.

Even though nobody has properly defined the standard; it can be inferred that standard means integrated personality development, contribution of education towards economic growth, social development and cultural renaissance.

The standard in education is looked at from three dimensions. They are (a) Adequacy i.e. whether curriculum is adequate and relevant to the needs of society, (b) Dynamism i.e. whether the present education is in relation to the current levels of knowledge, skills & values, and (c) Comparability i.e. to what extent these educational systems are comparable to the systems in the west.

If we probe into these questions deep, we get an emphatic 'no' as an answer.

In spite of the huge expenditure on Education, why is there such a fall in standards and quality especially in the Post Independence period ?

Three important factors are operating in the system. These factors are to be analysed, interpreted and the defects and lacunae in the factors are to be identified and remedial measures are to be found out. These primary factors are Teachers, Learners and Administrators.

The major objective of this paper is to identify the quality of the Teachers, Learners, Learning material and the quality of administration and suggest remedial measures.

Teachers in higher education are not at all aware of their role. The teachers failing to get berths in lucrative jobs and business enter into this profession without any aptitude. As a result of the entry of these craven left outs, their teaching is uninspiring, and lethargic. Since teaching lacks accountability and responsibility, they are less innovative, they repeat what they learnt years ago. Moreover the teaching degree is not a prerequisite for teaching in higher education; the teachers are totally unaware of the techniques of teaching and principles of educational psychology.

Above all there are no prescribed norms for the selection of teachers for higher education. The persons who are dropouts once, earn their degree through private appearance, enter into the profession with a passport of post graduate diploma. The qualification prescribed for the post also are not uniform.

The Report of the Kothari Commission (1966) emphasizes the Teacher factor thus : "Of all the different factors which influence quality of education and its contribution to national development the quality, competence, and character of teachers are undoubtedly the most significant." The Education Commission of 1949 held the same view and stressed the importance of this factor in Education.

So at the outset in order to maintain quality in higher education, the selection of Teaching Personnel must be scientific. For instance an aptitude test must be administered at the time of selection and the selection must be centralised. The UGC can form a Faculty recruitment Board for the purpose and after selection, a course can be offered on Pedagogical techniques. In order to promote National integration there should be provision for mobility among the faculty of higher education.

In order to keep the faculty abreast of the latest developments in their respective fields, periodic inservice training can be



offered at one centre. For this purpose, the advanced centres of the universities can be assigned this task of inservice programme.

Since there is no barometer to assess the efficiency of teaching, an evaluation procedure can be developed and on the basis of the results of the evaluation, the question of retaining the teachers in the job or re-educating the teacher can be determined.

The faculty, which is selected by unproven methods, has neither professional competence, nor academic leadership. It is concerned with coverage of the syllabus and is concerned with the pass percentage and least concerned with the quality of learning.

To get rid of these evils, merit alone should be the consideration for the selection. The very fact that the teachers of higher education have formed their associations in 1970's to voice their grievances, indicate that their service conditions are deplorably low.

To alleviate the service conditions there must be much freedom in their academic pursuits and the administration must be free from regimentation. The universities and colleges must adopt a right attitude towards the Teachers. Liberal leave rules, generous pension benefits, housing loans etc. will boost up the morale of the Faculty to a greater extent.

To put it in a nutshell, a teacher's responsibility is not confined to the imparting of knowledge alone, they have to produce intellectually mature, morally upright, socially committed and spiritually inspired youth for future India.

Curriculum is a vehicle for Faculty. There is a hue, and cry about the suitability of the curriculum. Educationists constantly complain that it is narrow, bookish, theory oriented. There is no provision for practical application. The courses that are offered in the Universities and colleges are too general and the objectives are not clearly spelt out and it is also realized that these scarce objectives are not realized at the end. There is little room for the promotion of original thinking.

In a multifaceted like India, medium of instruction crops up as a problem in the field of Education. It is advocated by the centre that Hindi, the national language should be the medium, but the question arises is it rich enough to teach the modern science and technology. The linguistic minorities claim their right to educate their wards through this regional language. But theirs' too is poverty

stricken as far as production of text Books in their regional language is concerned. So the question of medium of instruction remains unsolved.

The panoramic view of the existing curriculum in higher education warrants that the process of cognition is a complex process and if mastery is to be ensured the teaching learning activities should be geared along very scientific lines. The cognitive development model of instruction, (Piaget and Bruner) the behaviour modification model (Skinner), the task analysis model (Gagne) the advance organizer model (Ausubel), the humanistic model (Rogers, Maslow) are equally relevant to all levels of higher education. These models could be developed to fit into the nature of the subjects, size of the class and mental level of the learner. It can be agreed that there should be greater flexibility in the syllabi of different courses of studies in the higher Education with provision for experimentation.

Conclusively it can be said that the syllabus should be quite descriptive and specific. The syllabus should invariably have some link built in for application oriented courses at undergraduate and post graduate levels. If instruction methods are in tune with the development of science and technology the students, the pivotal factor in the whole system of education will get more benefit.

Population explosion in India has resulted in Educational explosion. The political leaders concentrated the quantitative expansion of educational institutions and not the quality. In the course of 40 years, in higher education spectacular expansion has taken place in enrolments and establishment of colleges and universities. The score board proudly shows that the number of students has swelled from 10,000 to 44 lacs, colleges from 200 to 4558, and the universities from 12 to 119. This expansion has taken place without any planning and perception.

The students are mostly first generation learners. The students who come out successful in higher secondary courses are not fit for analytical thinking and critical examination of the material taught in colleges. As a result of the poor input in the colleges, the colleges face frequent lockouts, strikes and agitations. The quality of performance of the students indicate the trends in education. Dropouts and failures account for 60% of the students enrolled, a colossal waste of resources. The Report Challenge of Education



states that a large number of those who pass the examination are classified under third division which is another index of low standards. These students enter into the portals of colleges in the garb of 'reservation policy', and 'equal educational opportunity'. Instead of denying them education they can be well received, in the fold of higher education prescribing certain minimum standards. But a remedial programme can be organised to such students so that they can receive education on par with other socially advantaged students.

In order to ensure higher quality, the students must be checked from flocking in one particular 'standard' college. There must be ceiling for the enrolment of students in courses. The enrolment must be in accordance with available resources in the colleges.

It is also advocated that instead of colleges admitting the students, a centralised agency like university can take up the task of admissions thereby uniform standards and norms can be followed in admissions. It is strongly recommended that GRE type entrance test should be administered to every aspirant so that wastage and stagnation can be minimised.

A student should be both the receiver of education as well as contributor to the society. For this every college student should be placed for practical training in an establishment where he can learn the trade and is ready to take on, once his theoretical studies are completed.

Diagnostic centres, educational and guidance programmes in the institutions will be a boon to the student community in general, particularly for first generation learners.

Examinations are to measure individual student achievement in learning and the effectiveness of Instructional Programmes. Unfortunately, the very educational system is geared totally to the examinations and the resulting dangers are obvious. For instance the process of assessing achievement in learning is much more complicated than it appears to be at first glance. The pass percentage or even distinctions achieved do not indicate effective achievement. We see the candidate who is awarded 'O' in the University examination miserably fails in the IAS entrance examinations.

Examinations in most cases are invalid. They examine the learner at the surface level. They suffer from triviality and ambiguity.

Examinations put students under harmful stress. Fear of failure haunts their mind and destroys their self confidence. As a result the joy of learning is totally lost.

Higher Education is meant for individual personality growth and development, ultimately contributing to growth and progress of society. But unfortunately our examinations do not satisfy objectives and the system needs effective reforms.

It is hoped that competence based education and criterion referenced examination would solve the problem to some degree. It can also be suggested that cumulative assessment of the cognitive domains is one of the solutions offered. The evaluation programme must be so planned that the teacher must be able to identify and assess the achievement attitude, aptitude and other vital factors of personality of student.

There are many factors which are responsible for the poor quality in Higher education. Administrative factors are one of the causative factors for the sorry state of affairs. For instance, a Principal of a college or a Vice chancellor of University does not know any basic tenets of Educational Administration. They are promoted as heads of institutions by virtue of seniority or due to some other caste or political considerations. They learn the art of administration only after sitting on the pedestal.

The theory of administration states several administrative functions of Principals. One of the functions is decision making. It has been told that the Principals have to take variety of decisions depending upon the nature of the problem. Sometimes they have to remain indecisive. Are our Principals independent in taking decisions? It is invariably charged that they do not take decisions on their own and their decisions are influenced by other personnel immediate to them.

It has been proved that participatory decisions are effectively carried out.

The colleges function smoothly in open climate and in closed climate conditions the morale of the teachers is low, the performance is also poor and the teachers in that set up are disloyal to the institution and to some extent antagonistic towards administration.



Administrative theorists cite two type of administration i.e. maintenance administration and developmental administration. The type of administration depends upon the style of leadership.

In general we can say the administration should be flexible and should be free from regimentation. Unfortunately the hierarchy of administration do not have proper perception regarding the goals of higher education. They have negative attitudes towards teachers and students in general. Their attitudes are not conducive to any innovation. For instance, as an innovative measure, it was decided to recruit experts to teach cultural education. The administrations stood in their way and wrote a dissenting note saying that they did not possess paper qualification.

So the decentralisation of administrative system and absolute autonomy will be a suitable answer to the problems like these.

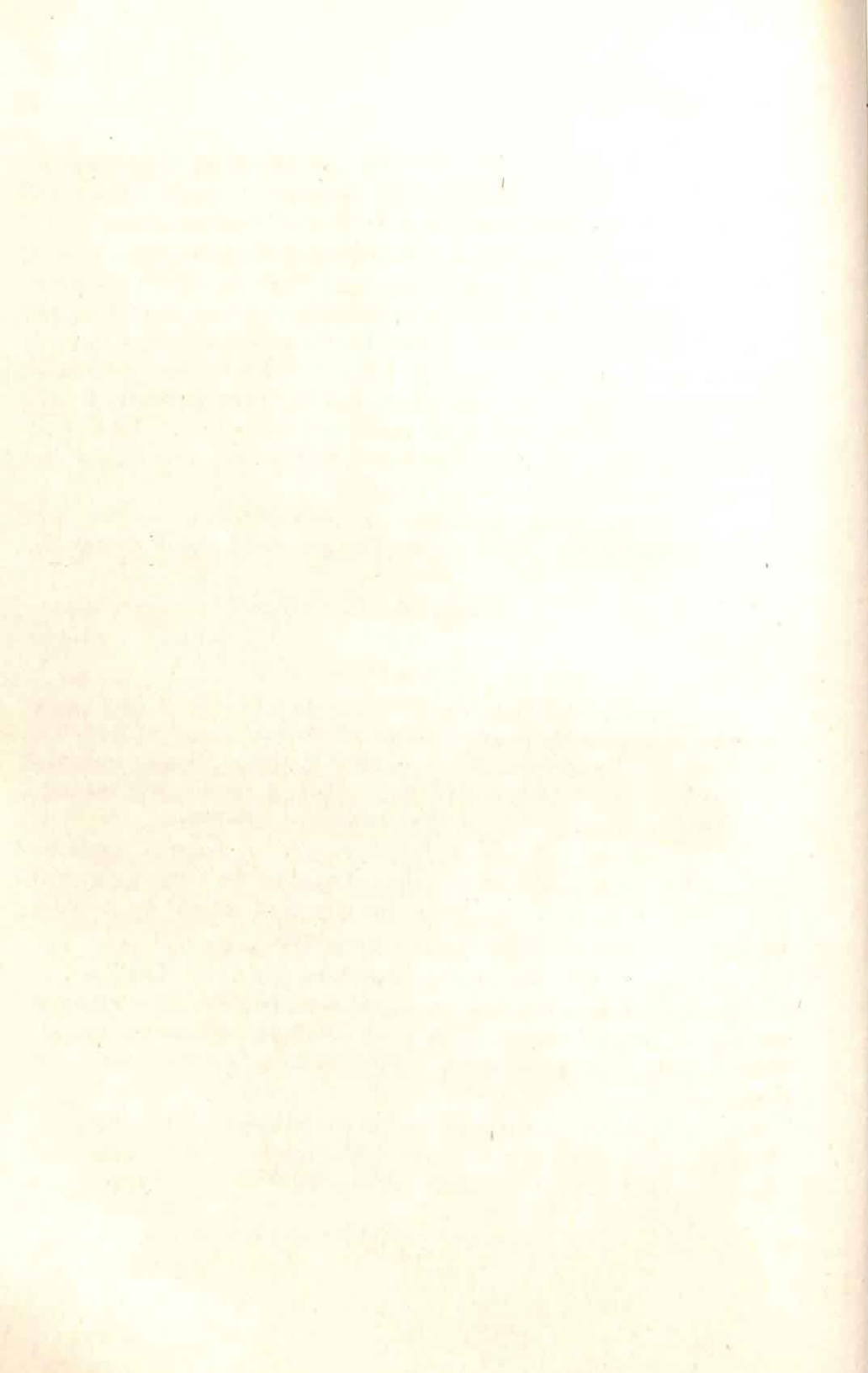
It can also be recommended that Indian Educational Service can be formed in the lines of IAS and IPS and only those can aspire for Vice-chancellorship and principalship.

The rigid administration system neither allows new technologies nor innovativeness in terms of communication procedures. Solutions to these maladies is possible by introducing in a phased manner functionality, accountability, proper in service and pre-service training through continuing education programmes.

In future only those having degrees in the area of educational administration should be selected as Administrative personnel and a short term course on office management should be a must for ministerial staff of colleges and universities.

The recent Ministry of Education document 'Challenge of Education-A Policy perspective', criticised Higher Education as follows : 'The internal efficiency of the higher education system is extremely low.....poor quality of course.....colossal waste of resources.'

If these views are to be disproved, a thorough re-education of teachers, fostering of new principles of teaching techniques, and thorough overhauling of Educational Administration are imperative.





# Perspectives of Foreign Language Teaching in India

PAWAN SURANA

Education is a process that brings about desirable changes in human personality. It develops a human being and prepares him to contribute to the betterment of society. Betterment includes not only material development but also widening of mental horizons and refining of moral susceptibilities. An educated person acquires a broad outlook and a better understanding of the world in which he lives. It is this liberal attitude that makes man incessant to evolve a better society and to live a more worthwhile life. This aspiration sustains man in his material as well as aesthetic life. Like all other disciplines, foreign language teaching should also be seen in this perspective.

Teaching of a foreign language means opening a dialogue between two different cultures. Apart from the resultant socio-cultural interaction, foreign language teaching should necessarily be job-oriented and provide better professional opportunities.

## PRESENT POSITION

In India German, French, Russian, Arabic and Persian are the main foreign languages taught at higher educational institutions. Japanese, Chinese, Spanish and Italian are also taught in a few universities. German is taught in more than 135 higher educational

institutions. In Rajasthan the University of Rajasthan provides for German, French and Russian courses, Jodhpur University offers only French courses and Banasthali Vidyapith has facilities for its students to study German and French. German and French are also taught in some schools. Russian, Spanish, Japanese, Chinese are, however not taught at the school level.

Foreign languages like German, French and Russian are taught at various levels :—

1. Foreign language as the main subject in B.A., M.A., M.Phil/ M. Litt. and Ph.D.
2. Foreign language as a subsidiary subject in pre-degree and degree courses.
3. Teachers training courses in foreign languages. These courses are run by CIEFL (in German, French & Russian) and by Max Mueller Bhavan, Poona in German.
4. Certificate, Diploma, Post/Advance Diploma courses which make it possible to study a foreign language as an extra subject. These courses can be done simultaneously with the main courses of B.A., M.A., M.Phil., M.Litt., Ph.D. etc. Some universities also run specific science German courses for students of science and technology.

Most of these courses do not differ much from the courses in any other discipline at higher educational institutions. These courses should be modified and extended in such a way that they should have social relevance in modern India. The foreign language teaching should be in accordance with the requirements of our society.

Why do Indians acquire the knowledge of a foreign language? The answer to this question would give us an idea of the possible utility of these courses at different levels.

#### REASONS OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

i) Students who undertake M.A., M.Phil or Ph.D. courses mostly wish to become foreign language teachers translators or interpreters. Some of them would even like to work in a particular foreign embassy.



ii) Students undertaking Certificate, Diploma or Post/Advance Diploma Courses in a foreign language have different aims :—

- (a) Many of them aspire to go to a particular country either for higher studies or for work or for practical training. Students knowing that specific foreign language get a scholarship easily to go abroad.
- (b) Many wish to improve their career prospects, particularly in Indo-foreign collaborations. For instance, many engineers learn German to get better jobs in Indo-German Collaborations.
- (c) Scientists and technicians learn a foreign language to be able to read foreign journals.
- (d) Some expect to improve their social and academic status by the knowledge of a foreign language. In addition to their routine educational qualifications a diploma in a foreign language is considered a prestigious educational qualification in society.
- (e) In some educational institutes Certificate/Diploma in a foreign language is a pre-requisite to do the main courses like Ph.D. and M.E. etc.
- (f) Some Indians have developed a kind of affinity with a particular foreign country. Some of them for instance feel bound by cultural ties with the Germans. Germans have contributed a good deal in the research work done in Sanskrit. Some Indians learn German merely with a wish to reciprocate and this is sufficient motivation for them to learn German.
- (g) Some people have developed sudden interest in a foreign language through some incidents or due to certain historical factors which make them anxious to learn a particular foreign language.
- (h) Some students learn foreign languages to work in the field of tourism or with a travelling agency, some times even as tourist guides and for better job opportunities in good hotels.
- (i) Some young Indians learn a foreign language and even complete their post-graduation in it as they wish to opt

for that literature as a subject in the competitive exams. (esp. in I.C.S.). The number of such young Indians is however, rather limited.

- (j) Doctors, Engineers, military officers, Bank Officers dealing with foreign exchange programmes etc. learn a foreign language, so that it may help them to get promotions in their jobs.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT AND MODIFICATION OF THE COURSES

Foreign language teaching should necessarily fulfil the above mentioned aims and objectives of the learnings. We should modify and intensify some specific courses for translators, interpreters, tourist guides and Indian diplomats.

The following steps can be taken to overcome the shortcomings of foreign language courses :—

1. There is no uniformity in these courses at the national level. There is diversity in the same type of courses in structure, content, teaching material, testing and evaluation and even in the duration of the courses at the national level. Complete homogeneity in teaching a foreign language is perhaps not feasible as it leads to a kind of boring mechanism and fails to encourage the teachers to take their own initiatives. But all these courses should have a similar standard so that co-ordination of different courses of different universities can be made possible. The U.G.C. should frame a co-ordination policy with the help of an expert committee at the national level.

2. Foreign language teaching should not be an isolated programme as it is at present in some universities. There is a lot of scope to start advance courses and inter-disciplinary projects. Comparative linguistics to study the similarities and differences between a foreign language and Hindi or any other Indian language will not only facilitate understanding both the languages but it will also help in understanding the socio-cultural aspects of the two countries. Comparative studies of the two languages will also help in teaching both the languages a foreign language and an Indian language in a better way. This would be very beneficial to India as it requires to develop an active motivated method of teaching important Indian languages as foreign languages. Study of comparative



literature should also be encouraged as it will begin an interaction between the social cultural milieu of the two countries. Comparison of two foreign literatures will open two windows, from which both the cultures can be seen through two angles, and it will be possible to understand the people of the two countries in a better way. Very few Indian Universities have started courses in comparative literature. These courses need to be developed properly.

3. The foreign language teaching should be related to the national relevance. The modern foreign languages, especially German, French, Russian, Japanese, Chinese, Spanish, Italian, Arabic etc. should be considered as medium languages in the field of science and technology. Special courses should be framed to facilitate the learning of these languages so that the scientists and technicians of India and those of the foreign countries can communicate with each other freely and can be mutually profitable.

4. Due importance should be given to impart the knowledge of socio-political and cultural background as well as the present condition of the foreign country whose language is being taught.

5. Many universities are running only beginners courses or mere certificate courses. The beginners course usually last for one academic year (10 months) i.e. 120-200 teaching hours. This course does not impart complete basic knowledge of a foreign language. Doing only certificate course is not of much use if it is not followed by a further course of study. Universities should have only Diploma courses of the duration of two academic years. Advance Diploma courses should be promoted because this would enable the students to use their knowledge of the foreign language independently in their profession. Specialized Advance Diploma for translators and interpreters should also be promoted. Apart from these extensive foreign language courses intensive courses should also be promoted, which should contain the same number of teaching hours in a shorter duration of time. These intensive courses can be run for students in the summer vacations and for non-students during the academic session. Some young learners do not have the patience to attend a long term course, as a result of which many of them drop out before the completion of the course. Universities should organize need-based intensive courses from time to time for a particular group of learners in order that the teacher may frame

the course and teach the target group in a manner that meets their need, viz. persons employed in tourism, engineers working in different firms, government officials, medical professionals etc.

6. The courses of foreign languages as main subject in B.A., M.A., or M.Phil. should not only be theoretically sound but the students should be given practical training in such a way that they are able to work effectively as teachers, translators and interpreters. Priority should be given to the admission of candidates who wish to work in smaller cities after completing their studies. At present teachers prefer to work in big cities like Delhi, Bombay, Pune, Hyderabad etc. where comparatively advance courses in foreign languages are available. They do not even bother to apply for the university posts where certificate and diploma courses are taught. Teaching certificate, diploma and advance diploma classes should be given equal importance because it needs a lot of skill to teach these languages successfully. The certificate and diploma courses should not only be for name sake. Students should really learn the basic rules of the foreign language in these courses. At present these are actually side courses. So universities should introduce some compulsory tests during the academic session, which should be a prerequisite for appearing in the final examination. This would make the students work throughout the year and learn the language effectively. For proper learning of the language regular efforts are necessary.

7. Admission to highly specialized courses like M.A., M.Litt or Ph.D. should be restricted according to the future needs of the nation. Trained personnel available in excess of the need has adverse effects. It is not only a waste of effort but it produces frustration among the young educated persons. Proper planning according to the need of the country is necessary, otherwise it would cause frustration, as it is happening with other disciplines in India.

8. Foreign language teaching facilities are mostly available in urban areas. Students of different colleges in smaller towns are not benefited from these facilities. The U.G.C. should explore the possibility of teaching foreign languages through distance education (contact and correspondence courses, radio and television courses etc.). This would give young aspirants of smaller towns an opportunity to learn a foreign language.

The CIEFL (Hyderabad) offers M.A. correspondence in German, French and Russian. This is an appreciable step but these



courses need to be developed in a proper way. These should not be more extensive in duration than the regular courses. Exact and clear instructions with proper guidance should be given to the distant students, so that the students of those universities are benefited where these courses do not exist. These correspondence courses should be considered equal to the regular courses. Apart from advance courses some elementary distant courses should also be introduced.

9. Teaching of important foreign languages should also be started at school level as one of the optional subjects. This could begin with Central Schools where German, French and Russian are subjects in their 10+2 curriculum. This would provide an opportunity to improve the standard of foreign language learning at the university level. At present in most of the universities even in B.A. an optional foreign language is taught at the elementary level, since students taking up foreign language as an optional subject do not generally possess any knowledge of the foreign language.

10. Looking to the importance of knowledge of foreign languages, the U.G.C. and the universities should give priority or at least due importance to the foreign language teaching. In many of the Indian universities the foreign language teaching does not even have a separate department. Foreign languages are taught under the auspices of the English department or under Department of adult education. Consequently, the experts of other disciplines are unable to develop foreign language teaching in a proper manner. So these courses are still run as before without any positive change according to the needs of time. In this set up a foreign language teacher cannot exercise his initiative to develop and run these courses in an effective manner. In many Indian universities all foreign languages are taught under one department called Deptt. of Foreign Languages or Deptt. of Modern European Languages. Each foreign language should preferably have its own department for proper development, since each language requires different methodology for successful teaching.

11. For competent foreign language teaching a well trained language teacher is required. A foreign language teacher should not only master the target language but he/she should also have the skill to teach it properly and successfully. In some Indian universities where only Certificate and Diploma courses are available, these

courses are taught by experts of other disciplines who possess the basic knowledge of the target language. The U.G.C. and the universities should not allow this state of affairs because the experts of other discipline do not generally possess mastery over the language. A kind of mechanical teaching thus takes place, which only fulfils the formality, but does not impart foreign language education in a proper way. All foreign language teachers should not only possess a good degree in that subject but also undergo a teachers training course. Basic courses should also be taught by language experts. In India there is scarcity of training programmes for foreign language teachers. Universities should undertake some steps to carry out effective training programmes for foreign language teachers. It should be obligatory for a foreign language teacher to undergo teachers training.

To strengthen and make proper utilization of the foreign language teaching the following projects should be promoted at the national level :

(i) *Dictionary Project* : A systematic well formed project of preparation of bilingual and multilingual dictionaries should be undertaken at the national level. Much emphasis needs to be given to the preparing of bi-lingual dictionaries where renowned Indian scholars of foreign languages, German/Russian/French/Japanese etc. and scholars of Indian languages will work jointly on the project. No bureaucrats or one language experts will dominate in the work of preparing bi-lingual dictionaries where sound knowledge of both languages is necessary. At present there are no such projects.

(ii) *Translation Cell* : An effective central translation cell should be established for different kinds of translations as translation of general texts and translation of literary texts etc. There is an urgent need to popularise good works of modern Indian literature through translation in foreign languages and foreign literature in important Indian languages. Though some facilities of translation of foreign scientific and general texts are available, they are neither systematically and easily available nor are they sufficient for a vast country like India.

(iii) *Project of comparative studies of foreign languages and Hindi or other Indian languages* : The present linguistic studies have shown that to have better insight into the structure of a foreign language and an Indian language, the comparative studies of these languages



would be useful. It would also help in teaching both the languages as foreign languages in an effective way.

(iv) *Establishment of the department of comparative literatures as interdisciplinary subject* : Different Indian universities should promote comparative literature as an interdisciplinary subject specially where advance diploma or M A. Courses in foreign languages are available. The universities should endeavour to create more facilities to study comparative literature. This would really open a kind of creative dialogue between two different cultures

(v) *Central library of Foreign Languages* : Reference and literary books and magazines of foreign languages are generally not available in Indian universities since they are very expensive. A central library of foreign language should be established at the national level for the use of Indian scholars of foreign languages to do further research work and to keep themselves upto date in the field.

(vi) *Specific Research Projects about the culture and civilization of foreign countries* : An intensive research project to frame specific courses on the culture and civilization of foreign countries should be started. This project should highlight a foreign country's culture and civilization, keeping in view its socio-political and socio-historical aspects. These side courses would enable the students to have an insight into the concerned country. The centre of German studies at JNU is planning to introduce a kind of "Tool Course" on the cultural History of the German speaking countries in some semesters of the five year M A. course in German. Knowledge of a Foreign language does not serve its purpose if it is not accompanied by knowledge of the culture of that country.

(vii) *National Data Bank (Documentation Cell)* : A national documentation Cell should be established to carry on academic activities. It should provide data in the field of languages, literatures and cultures of foreign countries. This would enable the scholars of foreign languages to carry out their basic research in India.

(viii) *National Coordination Committee of Scholars of different Languages* : Establishment of coordination committee of the experts of foreign languages would help in bringing about uniformity and it would suggest some positive steps for the development of foreign language teaching, which is a felt need in India today.

(ix) *National Seminars and Symposia for the teachers of Foreign Languages* : There is not sufficient interaction among the experts of different Indian universities and not much discussion on foreign languages. Many of the foreign language teachers are working at Indian universities in isolation. There should be more frequent academic contacts among scholars through symposia, seminars etc. This kind of academic contact would nurture better understanding of the subjects.

(x) *External and Internal evaluation* : Understanding and learning from each others work would also be more possible if the external experts are invited to conduct examinations. The internal evaluation should be co-ordinated with the external evaluation for proper evaluation. All the higher educational institutions should have both kinds of evaluation. In some universities only internal evaluation system for foreign languages is prevalent. This is not desirable in India as it hinders impartial judgement. The external assessment would give the subject teacher the benefit of second opinion. The Board of studies of the foreign languages should be constituted of internal as well as external subject experts.

Study of foreign languages should not end with the award of a certificate nor it should be undertaken for its snob value. Foreign language learning should lead to a better understanding of the world, should help understand the cultures and people of other countries. However, it should not make the learner accept whatever is foreign and overlook the nation's need.

It should certainly not be a step towards escaping from the national reality and aspiring to go abroad for a materialistic better life instead of employing ones knowledge for the progress of the nation. It would be certainly be painful if the learners of foreign languages in India model their expectations move materialistically, and on the pattern of the highly industrialized and affluent society of the west which would not be in tune with the actual condition prevailing in our country. Knowledge of foreign language should certainly help young Indians to have better jobs but it must also play a vital role in the nations development.

All diploma courses in foreign languages should impact the knowledge of the foreign languages in such a way that it can be utilized as an instrument of communication in society. In a literate society foreign language has always been the main source of cross-



cultural exchange and contact. Common language is the actual link between people of two countries. Foreign language plays an important role as a vehicle for the exchange of knowledge and intellectual trends. Besides, the foreign language should serve as a medium to make the foreign technical and scientific know-how accessible. Creative dialogue between two cultures is possible through knowledge of the foreign language. Good translations of literary and philosophical works in both the languages would expand this creative dialogue for other citizens of both the countries who did not have an opportunity of learning the foreign languages. Creative cultural dialogue would not be possible if a mere technical communication takes place. Foreign language teaching should encompass both the areas.

While introducing innovations and evolving better methods of imparting education in foreign languages to the Indians, it should be seen that this liberal process may not descend to the position of waste in a litter basket with no practical use and that it must also not rise to the pedestal or providing an extravagant status symbol, but serve to promote India's speedy development and to further enhance the intellectual arena of the Indian literature.

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# Random Thoughts on Higher Education and its Problems

N. M. SINGHVI

There has been a strong demand for a radical change in the system of education since pre-independence days. Mahatma Gandhi introduced the idea of the so called Basic Education (Nai Talim) keeping the prevalent situation and the demand of the time in view. This concept was even accepted for experimentation. After independence people ranging from the Commoner to the President and the Prime Minister of our country have always expressed their views in favour of total change in the organisation and system of education.

Most people condemn the present system of education because it has caused and aggravated the problem of unemployment. It is onerous to understand how the problem of unemployment is being associated with the system of education. The problem of unemployment, is the outcome of our wrong economic policies and not of education. The pace of economic development in our country has been so slow that it has failed to feed the ever increasing number of mouths. The economic planners, whether they are politicians or bureaucrats, have very tactfully held the poor teachers responsible for their own mistakes by saying that the only cause of the devastating problem of unemployment is the present system of education. If this is so, how is it that doctors, engineers and scientists who are the products of this very system of education are in

great demand all over the world ? Now the question remains whether the system of education is responsible for the problem of unemployment or our erroneous economic policies. This demands a serious probe on our part.

A number of education commissions, committees and educational conferences have given their reports on education but all of them have failed to submit the draft of the new system of education and the way to implement it. The great educationists of our country have bitterly criticised the present system of education but ironically none of them has shown the path of radical change. Mere criticism will not do. Let some one come forward and light a candle in the midst of this general din about darkness.

In the post independence period a number of experiments in the system of education have been made. At one time attempts were made to introduce the Multipurpose Higher Secondary System, at others to introduce the 10 + 2 (Ten plus two) system, but of no avail, as every one knows. Our society showed no inclination to accept these changes. They failed miserably due to the lack of willingness on the part of the people, and proper means and resources required to introduce the new system uniformly all over the country. Unless a system is introduced uniformly all over the country, it can not be readily accepted. On the contrary partial introduction condemns it altogether.

If the persons in favour of change stop their unconstructive criticism and accept the possibility of reforming the system in practice and engage themselves sincerely to implement those reforms, something substantial can be achieved and some relief can be felt.

Why are the students of this age bewildered ? For this their parents are more to blame than teachers. They go on getting their children educated without keeping any definite aim in mind. The students who go in for post-graduation should aim at becoming teachers and engaging themselves in research work. Most of the students take admission to post graduate courses because they have nothing else to do. They continue their higher education without any purpose. Guardians and other related parties very well understand what third or second class degree holders would do. Even then they like their sons and daughters to continue their education. They forget that a student who has once enjoyed college



life becomes unfit for any work. He becomes a dandy and develops white-collar mentality. If compelled by circumstances to do something, these young persons will either do it imperfectly and with difficulty or they will fail altogether. This failure will lead them into frustration. Therefore higher education must be imparted to only those young persons who can really contribute something to their nation and society.

If we desire that students really learn from their teachers there must be a close contact between the two. This has become impossible these days because the increasing crowd of students has compelled the authorities to admit more than a hundred students in one class. In such a large class any talk of personal contact, even to the limited extent of knowing the names of all the students is sheer non-sense. Hence there is a need to redetermine the pupil-teacher ratio. Related to this is the question of the rules regarding the admission of the pupils which are framed by the university. The policy of granting admission to every Tom, Dick and Harry who has passed the Higher Secondary examination is not only responsible for the wastage of national resources but for the wastage of students' time and energy as well. Such students merely add to the strength of the class and cause difficulty in creating a proper atmosphere for the teaching-learning process. This leads us to conclude that higher education must be only for the talented students. If this policy is to be implemented there will be a need to encourage the young persons to take up job-oriented activities after passing the higher secondary classes.

It will be proper to draw the people's attention towards one more aspect of the present education. We are all aware of the fact that owing to the scarcity of physical resources in the centres of higher education, on the one hand students are unable to get proper learning opportunities and on the other hand this gives birth to the problem of indiscipline. In most colleges, these days the classrooms are fewer and smaller than they should be. The situation becomes worse when politicians pressurise the authorities to admit students even with a low percentage of marks. To create a proper atmosphere for the teaching-learning process physical resources must be made available in proportion to the number of students. If the physical resources are difficult to come by because of financial difficulties, the admission rules should be made more rigid.

It has become necessary to control the increasing number of students for several reasons. One of them is the shortage of resources. The wastefulness of these limited resources needs to be controlled. How to procure resources for higher education? This seems to be a great and formidable problem. This problem can be solved only when the students are made to bear the full financial burden of their education. Even at present in many universities and colleges evening courses are being conducted. These courses are financially self-sufficient. Not only this, students are more regular and disciplined in such courses. If the whole of higher education becomes self sufficient like this, a lot of the exchequer which is being spent on higher education can be saved. This amount can be utilized for school education and thus the percentage of illiteracy may be lowered to a great extent.

One may doubt the validity of the above solution by saying that if the fees are increased many poor but talented students would be deprived of higher education. I don't mean to deprive them of higher education. On the contrary I would like to suggest that poor students should also be admitted to higher education but they must not be granted any sort of concession in the fees. The same fees must be charged from these as are charged from other students. These students must be granted scholarships equal to half the fees and expenditure, and for the rest loans must be advanced by the Social Welfare Department and the Education Department. The amount of this scholarship can be adjusted by increasing the fees of other students.

Secondly, these students can be provided with financial help by appointing them on part-time jobs in libraries games and sports-departments, college offices, and other departments. During vacations they can be employed temporarily in banks, insurance companies, railway offices and the like so that they may get practical training and side by side they may continue their studies without being a burden on any one

If self financing education scheme is introduced with the aim of restricting the number of students in higher classes, the number of the students in educational institutions will automatically decrease. Consequently the teachers will be able to encourage the students for other creative activities. This will be possible because of



personal contact with the students. If the classes are small, teaching work can be smoothly carried on.

Another benefit of this scheme would be that students will be fully attentive to studies because they will have paid so much for them. The problem of the teachers avoiding classes will be solved automatically because the students, having paid such heavy fees, will themselves compel the teachers to take classes. On the other hand the teachers will try to enhance their knowledge just to prove themselves worthy of the expectations of their students. Regular teaching will make the teachers active.

The main path of educational reform can be paved by bringing about changes in the curriculum as and when required. As we all know higher education is imparted by universities or by other autonomous institutes. The curriculum and other functions of the universities are determined by their officials. These officials are to see to it that the curriculum framed by them should be able to make the students feel responsible towards the well being of the nation. In universities there are boards of studies for various subjects. It is these boards that frame syllabuses for different subjects. But it is generally found that the members of these boards are little interested in changing the syllabuses. I have been teaching post graduate classes for the last twelve years but I have not experienced any innovation in the syllabuses. The same old subjects which were taught to us long ago, are being taught even to-day. In the name of change what we see is simply combining this paper with that and that with this. This is done just to oblige the person so that his book may capture market for two or three years.

The next problem regarding the syllabus is the teachers' disinterestedness in any type of change. If, by chance, a new topic is added, the teachers to teach it are not available, and if some persons show their willingness to teach it, they don't find reference books in the library. The only way to deal with this problem is that whenever a new topic is introduced, summer courses must be organized to train the teachers. This is, perhaps difficult. When the situation is such, how can we hope that the teachers will readily accept a total change in the syllabus. Can the persons in favour of a radical change answer this simple question? I think they can't.

It seems that the department of higher education is the only department which does not require any sort of training. The

persons who are to teach in colleges are not given any training. They are appointed and entrusted with the pious work of teaching without any preparation. In other departments people are required to undergo some training before being appointed or on entering the service. Even after having served for some time they have to attend refresher courses and in service training programmes. In my case I can say that I have not received any training though I have put in twelve years of service and have not had any opportunity to attend any summer course. Whenever there is a seminar on some subjects teachers have to follow such a long procedure to get the permission to attend the seminar that they prefer to drop the idea rather than pass through this ordeal.

I have had occasions to meet the members of boards of studies of different universities but I have not found any one of them willing to have a change. These are the persons who can bring about a change. But they complain that because of political interference they are unable to do anything. This is a lame excuse. The fact is that in matters of syllabus-framing and other educational programmes there is least political interference. The interference is limited only to appointments and admissions. Most of the politicians are ignorant of syllabuses. Hence they cannot interfere in this matter. If they do a little, the autonomous bodies are not obliged to accept their suggestions. Let us have a glance at the composition of the boards of studies. Most of the members are aged professors. The conveners of these boards are appointed from amongst these persons. They become conveners by virtue of seniority and professorship. This practice is injurious to the interest of education. My humble suggestion here is that all the teachers should, by turn, be allowed to have the opportunity of becoming either a member or convener so that more energetic and enthusiastic young professors may actively participate in framing syllabuses. If this is not done these boards will do nothing but appoint examiners.

Another issue related to this is that most students do not read the prescribed text-books. Ninety five per cent of these students do not even touch the reference books. They pass their examinations by reading one-week series or pass books. This results in their not grasping the subject. In fact it cripples their understanding which is a far graver loss than we realize. Such books must be banned by law. Besides this the boards of studies must frame the



syllabuses in such a manner that the importance of such books may automatically be lessened.

These days the uselessness of degrees is being considered at all levels. In our new education policy there is a mention of delinking some jobs from degrees. If a self-financing scheme is introduced, I am sure, the number of students will automatically be reduced and only talented students will go for higher studies. These students will be eager to learn, and won't need any examination. By abolishing examinations the wasting of both the money and the energy of the students can be avoided. Even otherwise the students seeking admission to higher education, are quite grown-up and have a sense of discrimination. Such grown-up students will need no goading and they will be quite attentive to their studies even without an examination.

We are all aware of the uselessness of degrees. They are questioned at all levels. The teachers prepare doctors, engineers and post graduates. They get these degrees after putting in hard labour for continuous five years and going through examinations. These degree holders are declared disqualified by the P.S.C's or other selection commissions within five minutes. When the degrees awarded by the universities are not trusted what is the use of holding examinations? In this connection an argument is put forth by way of justification. It is said that there is no uniformity in the standard of education imparted by the various universities. Hence it becomes necessary for the commissions and other employing bodies to re-examine the candidates. If such is the case attempts should be made to equalise the standard of education of the different universities. A funny thing regarding the validity of examinations and degrees can be observed when the universities awarding these degrees do not trust them. For example the students who have passed the first year science examination of a university have to take the P.M.T. and P.E.T. examinations of the same university to qualify for admission to medical and engineering colleges. This is an ironical situation. Under such circumstances the candidates who have passed the P.E.T. or P.M.T. can be exempted from taking the first year examination. These candidates go in for medical and engineering courses. Those who pass the P.M.T. or P.E.T. examination but do not find a place in the merit list, should be admitted to the next class. Those who fail should be back to the first year class.

If a person wishes to enter a Bank service, Insurance service or Railway service, he is required to pass the examination of the related board. This also puts a question mark on the justification of degrees awarded by the universities. In such circumstances the educational institutions should introduce alternative courses in addition to post-graduate courses in such a manner that the students may prepare themselves for the examinations of these boards side by side and be well acquainted with the services they wish to join later on. The seats in these courses should be fixed by the Man Power Planning Section of the Human Resources Deptt. and should be allotted to the educational institutions so that the problem of unemployment may be solved, and qualified and efficient personnel may be provided to various services.

If the degrees are abolished the students will be all the time conscious of the fact that whatever knowledge they imbibe during their stay in college is going to be all important in their future life. Knowledge acquired in this frame of mind will need no examination.

Another advantage of abolishing the examinations is that the double waste of crores of rupees can be avoided. At present, at one time the students are examined by the university and at another, by the service boards. By avoiding duplication of the examinations, a lot of money, energy, labour and time can be saved and employed elsewhere.

Another point related to examinations which is worth noting is that there is a system of giving a 21 day preparation leave before an examination. Then examinations consume more than two months. The assessment of answer sheets also takes a long time. So long as the results are not announced there is no next class. Thus the long process of examination consumes a precious time of more than five months. This long period can be saved and three years degree course can be finished in one and a half years if examinations are done away with. This colossal waste of time must at any rate be avoided. Along side, teachers should be allowed privilege leave instead of vacations. This will give them satisfaction which will result in efficient working.

Now the question is what will be awarded to the students as a testimony of their successfully completing the courses if the degrees are not awarded in the absence of examinations. The simple answer to this question is that the educational institutions should



issue the students certificates of attendance in which there must be mention of the subjects studied and the number of periods attended by them. For this, of course, confidence in the teachers is required to be awakened.

Another thing which is worthy of mention is that the teachers' field of work has been so expanded that they are more engaged in other activities than teaching. There are so many committees in colleges that some teachers, by manipulation, get themselves nominated to all of them and as successfully avoid teaching all the year round. Hence the teachers must not be involved in such work as getting the examination forms filled in, collecting them, submitting them to the concerned clerk; and during vacation, engaging them to the concerned work of physical verification either of library books or furniture or games material. Instead they should be encouraged to engage in research work.

No one can deny the fact that there is a close relationship between education and games and sports, but now a days one can see the sorry state of games and sports in colleges. They have never been so neglected before. Games fee is charged from every student but only a few students, are seen on the play grounds. To make things worse some mischievous students manage to get their names included in the teams going out to take part in tournaments. Their aim is not to play but pocket the travelling and daily allowances. The authorities, in order to avoid roguery on the campus, feel compelled to give in rather than resist them. These anti-social elements, often with a powerful political or tribal backing, always manage to deprive the really interested students from taking part in games. If all the students are not interested in games, games fee should be made optional. This will substantially reduce the games funds and make them unattractive for these anti-social elements. But if games fee is to be compulsory for all, then the college authorities must be endowed with suitable powers to curb the activities of these ruffians masquerading as sportsmen.

As far as the educational services are concerned I may put in that their state is miserable. People who were appointed as lecturers 28 or 30 years back are still lecturers and will retire as such. Even their sons and daughters work with them as lecturers. This breeds an inferiority complex in them. This is natural. When the U G C. introduced new grades in 1972 it was agreed upon that

after every five years these grades would be revised, but the irony of the situation is that even after 14 years, let alone revision, even the demand for interim relief has been turned down. The state governments are not ready to listen to the college-teacher's demands for raising the age of retirement from 58 to 60 and promoting lecturers to the grades of associate professors and professors. The main hindrance to the acceptance of these demands is caused by the administrative officers who do not want to see anybody getting more salary than them. Hence they either do not place the facts before the ministers or misinform them. I can cite a simple example of the indifference of the state governments. The U.G.C. agreed to redesignate lecturers as Asstt Professors. This did not entail any financial incumbrance; yet more than half of the state governments have not conceded this harmless demand.

Another related issue is the despotic behaviour of the managers of the privately managed aided colleges. These despots arbitrarily appoint and dismiss persons. Such colleges get upto 90% grant-in-aid from the government and charge heavy fees from the students and thus earn a lot of money, which is pocketed by the managers. Not that this is not known to the government, yet no action is taken against such institutions, nor are they nationalised, why?

Teachers will be greatly relieved if they are given residential facilities. At present the state governments are providing such facilities, even over-looking the waiting lists, to administrative officers of a lower grade than teachers. This type of partial treatment and the government's collousness towards teachers' problems have hurt their self respect and made them unwilling horses. If education is to be salvaged from its present plight, the teachers will have to be provided with better service conditions and promotions. If this is done talents will be attracted towards the teaching profession. Our new education policy has accepted the fact that no people can rise above the level of its teachers. Now let us wait and watch what the central and state governments actually do in this direction.

To solve all the above mentioned problems there is a strong need of an education bill which guarantees job security and equal opportunities of promotion to the teachers and safe-guards their freedom.

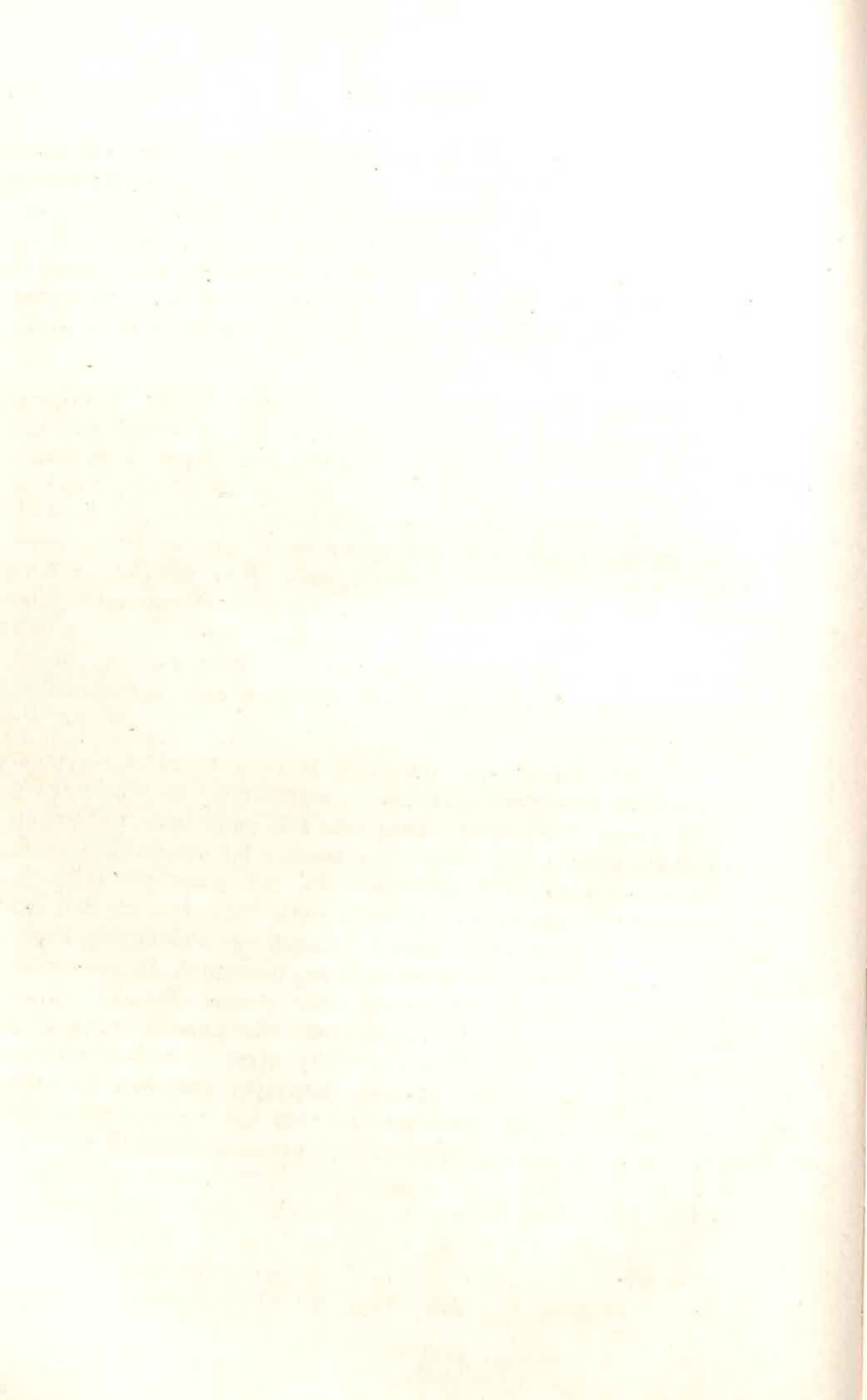
There is a loud cry over the prevailing corruption and demoralization everywhere. In fact moral values have vanished and



in the absence of moral education corruption has become rampant. Morality is a thing which can not be imposed upon people; it must arise from within. If moral values are to be cultivated attention towards this aspect must be paid from the very beginning. Environment conducive to morality, must be created right from level of primary education. When the students reach the level of higher education they become quite mature and it is not possible to make them cherish a new set of values.

Morality cannot be taught by precepts but by examples. Our teachers would do better to set an example of moral conduct before the students. This, however, is a tall order these days considering their miserable lot, which is to line up outside the doors of government officials in order to get their basic needs of life fulfilled. What is required is that both the government and society at large must pay the teachers their due regard; only then will the teachers discharge their duties towards society. There is no gain-saying the fact that it is teachers and thinkers who have given the ideas that have moved the world. It is pointless to expect from them to go on doing so while all the time being kicked about and humiliated by petty bureaucrats.

There is thus genuine need of reforming the present system of education. If certain changes are brought about in that case we could look forward to a better tomorrow. It is important to bring in a sense of discipline in the student community for without it nothing much can be achieved. It is important for all governmental and non-governmental agencies involved in suggesting reforms that top priority be given to the imposition of discipline at all levels to facilitate the proper and efficient working of any system. A change should not be brought about only for the sake of a change. Those involved in suggesting reforms should ensure that the changes suggested should be ones which would really bring about a marked improvement in the quality of education imparted and thus help the students grow in the right direction and help in the national development and in the establishment of the identity of the nation.





# Role Efficacy of University Teachers

RAMESH K. ARORA

As in other areas of national life, there prevails in India a heterogeneity of standards in the educational system. It is a truism that the levels of effectiveness of teachers and researchers vary from individual to individual, unit to unit, and institution to institution. Excellence does not have a uniform distribution and percolation in any profession and, accordingly, all shades of competence are found in any system that has a broad base of recruitment and a relative flexibility and autonomy in its operations. Logically, therefore, the degree of efficacy, defined in terms of "effectiveness" or "the power to bring about a desired result" would generally vary in the case of functionaries of the system.

## THE MULTIPLICITY OF ROLES

The university teacher performs multiple roles. Besides acting as a class-room teacher, he functions as a socializing agent, ego-ideal, facilitator, people's developer, researcher, specialist, evaluator, extension agent, organizer and administrator. Truly, a teacher has the potentiality and inherent capacity of emerging as a "leader" in any complex socio-organizational setting. Despite all innovations and devices to improve the system of transmission of knowledge, a teacher remains an indispensable

phenomenon. The difference between one teacher and the other is in the level of integration of his diverse faculties. To what extent a teacher, as a focal person, is able to respond to the expectations of the members of his role-set, is the key question in analyzing the role-efficacy of a teacher.

It may be highlighted that the efficacy or efficiency of teacher is closely associated with his responsibility and accountability. While responsibility has a moral, self-recognized and self-imposed basis, accountability is exercised in an institutional setting of norms, rules, rewards and punishment. Higher the sense of responsibility and the effectiveness of accountability, greater would be the role-efficacy of a teacher. The teacher, therefore, is an internally as well as an externally controlled professional whose conduct is influenced, among other things, by the synchronization of both these control sources. It would be pertinent, thus, to examine the constraints which impinge upon his role-efficacy.

### THE LIMITING CONSTRAINTS

The constraints imposed on the functioning of a university teacher may be analyzed from three perspectives viz, environmental, institutional and individual.

#### THE ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The contemporary Indian society places premium on the power of formal authority, of economic status, and of specialization. It is argued that a teacher lacks formal authority to harm and hurt (except through the neglect of his duties) and his role in influencing the crucial decisions of society is minimal. Further, the power system prevailing in our socio-political system can easily afford to ignore a teacher. Unfortunately, the teacher has been sidelined in the socio-economic system of the country and his role has been made peripheral. The consequential "power-void" unconsciously and subtly mitigates his faith in the overall effectiveness and influence of his profession. Moreover, the prevailing lack of work-culture, growing self-centredness, increasing materialistic orientation and a continuing erosion of moral values cumulatively affect the psyche as well as the performance of a university teacher. A teacher is not an island, and he should not be expected to become and



behave like one. The existing "ecology" of teaching is not forcefully positive to mould the teacher into an exceptional individual.

Though a university teacher has reasonable level of financial status, and it is likely to improve with the implementation of new UGC scales, yet merely through his regular and formal channels of income, he cannot compete with a number of other professional groups such as businessmen, industrialists, lawyers, private medical practitioners, engineers and senior bureaucrats who are dominant influences on the culture of our society. To put it bluntly, the businessman has become the "teacher" of our society, forcing the teacher to become a "businessman." The university teacher thus is trapped in a value-system fabricated by those who look to his profession with apathy and condescension.

Thus, the only device through which a teacher can hope to earn a higher status in society is through specialization and enhancement of his "applied competence." Unfortunately, the chasm existing between the academic and the operational worlds is so great in India that a teacher, except in a few selected disciplines, cannot emerge as real "specialist." Ironically, "teacher researchers" and "researching teachers" are rarely valued by the government as well as the business sectors unless such academicians move up the ladder and become notable office-bearers in influential research or grant-disbursing bodies. Only a few among university teachers, and hardly any of the college teachers, reach the top of the "aca-power" pyramid.

### THE INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

Let us look at the institutional context in which a university teacher functions. Today, rarely a person consciously opts for the teaching profession as his first career choice. Some of such "involuntary immigrants" into the teaching world continue cursing their fate by unfavourably comparing their status and prestige with those of their "luckier" colleagues in other more lucrative professions. In the absence of a systematic career planning in the universities, teachers wait for their turn to be promoted, with their mobility to move out crippled by familial demands. Absence of a rational reward and punishment system turns them into "satisficing" individuals with a gross absence of what Aurobindo called "positive discontentment."

Nevertheless, the 'good' teacher continues to be 'good' despite a lack or even absence of extrinsic motivations. A system that is based on the excellence of a few "self-motivated" individuals has feeble foundations. Unless there are self propelling mechanisms of growth in a human organization—which the university system is—the edifice of the system is prone to crumble.

It is not surprising therefore to find quite a few teachers "moonlighting" in a variety of occupations, hankering for convenient time-tables, spending insufficient time on the campus, sparing little time for students outside the class-room, underutilizing libraries and treating their job as a "routine" for existence and not as a "protein" for a healthy living. Their apathy is visible in the meetings of Faculties and even of Boards of Studies. The larger goals become subservient to parochial objectives. Certainly, it can be argued that for this malaise, teacher alone is not responsible: the environmental and institutional structures have their share of blame. In a system that is content in its level of achievement, excellence becomes a mythical objective.

#### TEACHER AS AN INDIVIDUAL

Let us look at the individual *per se*. There is no reason to believe that the university teacher is a lesser human being than a politician, bureaucrat, technocrat, industrialist or a businessman. As a product of the environment, he is as good or as bad as are his fellowmen in other occupations. In many ways, he is even better. But is teaching only an occupation? If yes, then, we should have no complaint against the teachers. But if it is a "profession" in a true sense and a "mission" in truer sense, then much more is expected of a teacher today. All teachers unconsciously or consciously realize that they are required to pursue certain norms of conduct that are higher than those expected of certain other groups, except for, may be, doctors and judges who too are generally attributed higher moral responsibilities in their professional conduct. "Role," after all, is an *expected* behaviour of an individual.

And fortunately, the universities do have a few teachers who are committed to the cause of "optimum" excellence. On such teachers depend the continuing growth and development of the system. At the "middle level of excellence" are teachers who struggle to improve but are constrained by a number of contextual



factors. A more congenial environment can certainly help improve their effectiveness as teachers. Otherwise, they, against their wish, are likely to be pushed into the valley of stagnation.

The teachers at the lower-rung of achievement—and let us assume there are only a few such teachers—are often careless and casual towards their responsibilities. Nevertheless, such individuals are not the monopoly of the teaching profession. Yet, unless, institutional and motivational devices are employed to prevent decay, the danger is that there will be sliding down of individuals from the first to the second and from the second to the third category.

### ACTION STRATEGY

Again, because of the very nature of the university system, improvements cannot be easily imposed from above. A self-conscious attempt by the university community is required to be made with a view to gently forcing teachers to move towards the idealized goals of continuing growth. It may be suggested, therefore, that at the institutional and the individual levels, the requisites to improvement of role-efficacy should be identified and implemented in a rational manner, keeping in view the demands as well as the limitations of the environment and the system. A brief reference to some of the salient issues in this perspective is made below.

*Effective Feedback :* Teachers' performance as "educators," and researchers should be periodically evaluated by outside experts. Even their publications may be sent to experts for review and opinions. Such comments will help the teachers to improve their skills, update their knowledge and modify their orientations, if necessary. As we move along the path of maturity, evaluation by colleagues and students can also be introduced in a gradual and cautious manner.

*Self-appraisal :* Continuing self-appraisal of one's work on an annual basis is likely to help a teacher to consciously improve his performance in priority areas. Accordingly, self-appraisal forms, duly filled in, should form part of a teacher's record. Besides, the teachers should be asked to prepare their annual plans of academic work which would help them in evaluating their output periodically.

*Continuing Education :* Paradoxically, a school teacher in order to move to a higher grade, must to be trained formally, but

training is not considered a requisite for the skill development of a university teacher. Even if the promotion or incentive system is not linked with formal training, the significance of continuing education for teachers cannot be over-emphasized. A well-planned and organized system of induction, foundational and in-service training for university teachers in various dimensions of the enterprise of knowledge is a pre-requisite to excellence. The recent scheme of organizing "academic staff colleges" at the State level, initiated by the University Grants Commission, is bound to contribute meaningfully in this realm. However, much more needs to be done for introducing a culture of rigorous continuing education at the general as well as the specific levels of learning. University teachers should be trained in various aspects of educational philosophy, educational technology, curriculum designing, creativity, classroom techniques, material production, textbook writing, research methods, thesis preparation, referencing, use of library, educational administration, and student counselling. Periodically organized workshops, seminars, symposia, and training programmes can promote a desirable level of socialization among teachers.

*Linkage with Community :* Presently, there is a greater need for enhancing the relevance of the university system to the rest of the community than it was ever before. While natural scientists have the inherent advantage of acting as 'applied scientists', the scholars of humanities, law, social sciences and commerce have to undertake special efforts in making their disciplines and output more relevant to the immediate and future needs of the community and the nation. Integrating the university system with the social, economic, managerial, and administrative systems should be a concern of high priority. In case the external environment is apathetic to such interlinkage, let the university community itself take the initiative in fostering meaningful relationship with the outside world.

*Self-regulation :* Generally, teachers resent external controls designed to reward or punish them. As a substitute—and a better one at that—the teachers' elected bodies should undertake the responsibility of identifying teachers who violate the norms of the code of conduct and who bring bad name to the university community as a whole. The demand for external controls is raised when internal controls are missing or are weak. Teachers' bodies



should help ensure that teachers engage their classes regularly and fulfil their responsibilities. Excellent teachers and researchers ought to be honoured by the universities and teachers' bodies. Unfortunately, politics is the most powerful impediment in the path of excellence and we may have to bear with this impediment at least for the foreseeable future. Nevertheless, a University Ombudsman may be a useful and effective device to examine and redress the complaints of and against teachers.

Above then are a few suggestions for making the structural context of the university teachers more congenial to the improvement of his role-efficacy. However, there is no substitute to self-motivated achievement orientation primarily aimed at excellence. An invincible feeling of self-pride and self-confidence can be a key factor in raising the status of a teacher in a society which itself is in search of excellence.





# National Policy on Education and Libraries

PAWAN K. GUPTA  
USHA PAWAN

During the past few years, we have seen an array of government policies being framed and discussed all over the country. With much fanfare the Challenge of Education - A Policy Perspective was published in 1985. This was actively debated and critically analysed by various groups and commented upon by educationists. At last 'the National Policy on Education - 1986' was adopted by the Parliament of India, resulting finally into 'the National Policy on Education : Programme of Action'. The latter was a product of 23 Task Forces. Each of the Task Forces, worked on a particular aspect for action in the light of 'the National Policy on Education'. Aspects varied from 'Making the System Work' through different levels of education, special groups of educands, special areas of education, to the 'Management of Education', covering almost all conceivable aspects on education from media or means, sports or culture, women or children, handicapped or scheduled castes and tribes, etc. A time bound action plan has been formulated to realise, all what is planned in 'the Policy'.

## GOALS OF EDUCATION

We are all conversant with what education has been doing and its *modus-operandi*. But first, let us see what it is supposed to

achieve beyond imparting education, its main function. In terms of the document, 'Challenge of Education', "it has to evolve principles, methodologies and guidelines for the application of knowledge for benefitting society. It is also expected to provide knowledge and skills for solving the problems of development. It must also enable the students to develop an understanding and a perspective of the physical and social environment"<sup>1</sup>. Secondly, emphasis has to be laid on the socio-economic well being, competence and creativity of the individual.

The education thus has been perceived to be an instrument in creating an all round personality of individual and the society. Its ramifications include the inculcation of a "scientific temper and democratic, moral and spiritual values", creation of an "awareness of the physical, social, technological, economic and cultural environment", developing a "healthy attitude to dignity of labour," fostering a sense of responsibility in national development, promoting international understanding, etc. All this is in addition to the visible functions of education i. e. conservation of knowledge and ideas, teaching and research.<sup>2</sup>

Institutions of higher learning are the main conservers of the knowledge and ideas accumulated by man in his struggle to conquer the physical world, to relate himself effectively to the society of his fellowmen and to develop his intellectual and spiritual capacities.

The draft 'National Policy on Education - 1986' has also reiterated these goals of education. The Policy states<sup>3</sup> :

Higher education provides people with an opportunity to reflect on the critical social, economic, cultural, moral and spiritual issues facing humanity. It contributes to national development through dissemination of specialized knowledge and skills."

"In the context of the unprecedented explosion of knowledge, higher education has to become dynamic as never before, constantly entering uncharted areas".

The key question arises as to how these goals, with far reaching implication on all aspects of education, be it imparting or evaluating; teacher or taught; government or society, will be achieved? To meet this challenge, the policy has proposed changes in the structure of education pattern, varying levels of autonomy



to institutions, redesigning courses and programmes, improved coordination and planning, laying down standards of minimum facilities, regulating admissions, transformation of teaching methods, educating the teachers and assessing their performance, enhanced support for research in the universities, opening open university and distance learning facilities, delinking jobs from degrees where it need not be necessary, developing the concept of rural university, encouraging self-employment and so on.

The point now is, how far should we hope to achieve the goals enunciated in the National Policy on Education-1986? There have been national efforts towards this goal when 'National Policy of Education of 1968' envisaged a radical transformation of the education system to relate it more closely to the lives of the people, provide expanded educational opportunities, initiate a sustained intensive effort to raise the quality of education at all stages, emphasise the development of science and technology and cultivate moral and social values ... That we have fallen far short of these goals is evident enough.'<sup>4</sup>

### PROGRESS IN EDUCATION

In the modern world educating the society by any means would be a legitimate target of any democratic society. Today in the area of science and technology, when the conscientious efforts are being made to utilise technological advances for national development and well being of the society, masses at each level may not be able to reap the harvest, even when and if the harvest is ripe.

The efforts done so far have to a large extent helped in the quantitative growth of educational institutions. The past 35 years have seen an increase in the total number of educational institutions from 2.3 lakhs to 6.9 lakhs. At different levels of education the growth in number of institutions has been :

| <i>Level of Institution</i> | <i>From</i>                 | <i>To</i>               |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Primary Schools             | 2.09 lakhs<br>(1950-51)     | 5.04 lakhs<br>(1982-83) |
| Middle Schools              | 13.4 thousands<br>(1950-51) | 1.23 lakhs<br>(1982-83) |

|                       |           |           |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Secondary and Higher  | 7,300     | 52,279    |
| Secondary Schools     | (1950-51) | (1982-83) |
| Colleges              | 1,783     | 5,012     |
|                       | (1961)    | (1983)    |
| Universities + Deemed | 49        | 120 + 13  |
| to be Universities    | (1961)    | (1983)    |

There has been a definite quantitative growth in the educational institutions at all levels in the past, but has it been effective? Could we even achieve the futuristic requirement laid down in the Indian constitution "The state shall endeavour to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years."<sup>5</sup> The commitment fell in 1960. Even after a lapse of 37 years the monster is loose.

The increase in the educational institutions, coupled with the additional efforts made by voluntary agencies and even with the active interest in all national plans to impart informal/adult education, has failed to eradicate illiteracy. From 16.6% literates (in a population of 3,61,130) in 1951; through 24.0% (in 4,39,235) in 1961; 29.45% (in 5,48,000) in 1971, we are now 36.23% literates (in 6,83,310) in 1981. As evident, the population has increased enormously and simultaneously the illiterates have grown, from 3,01,869 (in 1951) to 4,45,819 (in 1981). Our education policy and efforts so far have failed to realise our sweet dream of a democracy lacking illiterates.

With the current National Policy on Education (1986), and the planned Programme of Action, how long it will take to achieve our goal of complete literacy, universal elementary education, a society oriented to national development, that our scientists in place of seeking foreign assignments will work for the upliftment of the Indian masses; that people will adhere to national values, and insist upon observance of secular, scientific and moral values, be aware of the importance of protection of environment, etc? Answer is not readily available. Only the coming years can indicate the impact of Policy, whether it is helpful or not.

#### INFORMATION AND PROGRESS — MEANS TO ACHIEVE

Recent trend in the country is to lay emphasis on applied research, utilisation of scientific & technological research output,



rather than simply on research; use of technology, be it indigenous or indigenised technology after transfer. Even in the universities and other institutes of higher education a shift in this direction is being perceived. Plans are afoot to link research institutes and laboratories with the user industries, etc. to make R & D efforts cost effective.

The information is a key resource in the progress of all nations—underdeveloped, developing and developed. An effective transfer and use of information in the world perhaps is the only resource which can lead to all round development and progress, more so in a developing society, like that of India.

The 'Handbook for Information Systems and Services' published by Unesco, states about the value of information :

"Most nations have extremely limited capabilities and resources, both human and financial, to devote to the production and acquisition of scientific and technical information. Many of the developing countries produce less than one per cent of the world's scientific literature and perhaps an even smaller proportion of the total technical information. Some very advanced countries produce little more than 5% of scientific literature. These facts are relevant only in demonstrating that a country's development depends on its application of knowledge and information rather than in the generation of new knowledge. The knowledge and information are readily available somewhere in the world; they must however, be made accessible to all kinds of decision makers, to entrepreneurs and scientists, engineers and technologists, and means for communication and transfer must be established. In fact, in many countries it is the gap in information accessibility and transfer, and therefore use, which must be bridged if economic progress is to be made.<sup>6</sup>

The information sources, be they personal or documentary, thus become an important resource for national development. The books, a traditional source of communicating information, along with other not so traditional media—journals, patents, standards etc., and the modern media—including microdocuments and audio and visual records and still further to on-line information availability, have a vital role to play for any developing society, willing to forge ahead in a short span. In the International Book Year, the International Book Committee, sponsored by Unesco in its 'Charter of the Book', records :

"As public service [libraries] promote reading which, in turn advances individual well being, life long education and economic and social progress. Library services should correspond to each nation's potentialities and needs. Not only in cities, but specially in the vast rural areas which frequently lack book supplies, each school and each community should possess at least one library with qualified staff and an adequate book budget."<sup>7</sup>

"Since wars begin in the minds of men, the Unesco constitution states, "It is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed." Books constitute one of the major defences of peace because of their enormous influence in creating an intellectual climate of friendship and mutual understanding. All those concerned have an obligation to ensure that the content of books promotes individual fulfilment, social economic progress, international understanding and peace."<sup>8</sup>

The infinite influence of the public libraries has been depicted by Unesco in its 'Public Library Manifesto' more than a decade ago in 1972. It proclaims Unesco's belief in the public library as a living force for education, culture and information, and as an essential agent for the fostering of peace and understanding between people and between nations. It states that "the public library is a practical demonstration of democracy's faith in universal education as a continuing and life long process, the appreciation of the achievement of humanity in knowledge and culture."<sup>9</sup>

We may safely conclude that be it scientific or tecnological development or utilisation of fruits of R & D for the masses; adult, universal or distance education; social or economic progress; international understanding or peace; information resource, generated in the country or obtained from any other part of the world, has an extensively significant role to play.

Progress in the life of an individual, a community, or a country can be easily measured and projected by charting its consumption of information, and its information needs. They continue to absorb, assimilate and generate information. Education, contrary to the visible phenomenon in a school, college or university, is a life long process, rather effective education begins with the end of formal education, and continues at a pace, time, and place convenient to an individual. The state, conscious of its responsibilities of national development, will do well to promote



self education of masses, by investing in the development of a variety of information dissemination agencies-libraries, information centres, referral centres, etc. including the popular mass media.

### LIBRARIES IN THE NATIONAL PLANS

In India, library services have been considered essential in the furtherance of national development by all commissions, etc. As early as 1948, Radhakrishnan Commission quoted President Truman's Commission on Higher Education which says "The library is second only to the instructional staff in its importance for high quality instruction and research"<sup>10</sup> Radhakrishnan Commission itself went on record to compare libraries with the heart in human body saying, "the library is the heart of all the University's work; directly so, as regards its research work, and indirectly as regards its educational work....Scientific research needs a library as well as its laboratories while for humanistic research the library is both library and laboratory in one..Both for humanistic and scientific studies, a first-class library is essential in a University."<sup>11</sup>

Still later Kothari Commission (1964) said that "No new university, college or department should be set up without taking into account its library needs. . ."<sup>12</sup> It further said that "we should completely break away from the traditional view that a library is a conventional but more or less useless accessory"<sup>13</sup>

In the five year plans, for adult education, the importance of libraries has been recognised. Way back, in the First Five Year Plan, 1951-56, a scheme for integrated library service was introduced. During the period 1951-55, the Ministry of Education helped to establish 25 Integrated Library Services, 21 Janata Libraries and 137 District Libraries for social education. However, only a meagre amount was spent in the area. In the Third Plan a sum of Rs. 62 crores was provided under Social Education (which took care of library services for adult education) against which only Rs. 2 crores were spent in the first four years, on libraries and related items.

The Kothari Commission (1964) also recommended that an effective programme of adult education, among other measures, should make use of library services. While reviewing the recommendations made by the Kothari Commission, the Committee of Members of Parliament on Education (1967), recommended not only to use the attracting reading material and library services for

neo-literates but also emphasised that the adult or continuing education should be developed through the expansion of library services. The role of libraries as follow up of literacy campaigns, for neo-literates was also emphasised by the National Board of Adult Education (1970). Even with such recommendations, in the Fourth Plan, Social Education was given Rs. 10 crores only.

The Fifth Plan, 1974-79 visualised the programmes of adult education and functional literacy with the support of a network of village and block libraries, among other measures. The thinking was to develop a library system at the district level so that it was properly linked with the smaller units and could feed them. The states were also to get assistance from the Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation, created with the basic objective to promote and support public library movement in the country. Similarly the Sixth Plan stated to use network of rural libraries along with other mass communication programmes in the post-literacy continuing education.<sup>14</sup>

In the area of science and technology, a number of committees/commissions have viewed the scientific and technological information as an important resource for accelerating national development in all sectors and at all levels. In 1971, the National Committee on Science and Technology was set-up by Government of India, to provide the framework and evolve the policies for a comprehensive science and technology plan. The Science and Technology Plan, 1973 prepared by it was the first organised attempt in our country as such an exercise. It has identified the setting up of a national information grid for scientific and technological, economic, and social information as an area of national priority. It has envisaged the National Information System for Science & Technology (NISSAT). It is already being implemented by interlinking and coordination of a large number of information resources, systems and services into an effective information network. This, it is hoped, would enable the country to meet the information demands of scientists, engineers, technologists, management personnel, technicians, government, industry and business, etc. at all levels in all varieties of organisations, projects and missions. Building up of a strong national infrastructure would enable the country to take full advantage of the World Science Information System (UNISIST), etc.<sup>15, 16</sup>



For the Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-90), the working Group of the Planning Commission on Modernisation of Library Services and Informatics has reported, "While recognising the role of library and information services in planning, national development and other areas it is strongly recommended that henceforth Library and Information Services should be considered as independent sector like other sectors during national plan formulations."<sup>17</sup>

## LIBRARIES IN INDIA

India historically speaking has a rich tradition of culture, education, etc. Knowledge in all areas of human thought, science and technology, etc. is passed on to the succeeding generations in the form of variety of recorded media, with the help of a variety of institutions, chiefly consisting of libraries, and information centres, India too had since its ancient past such institutions, but the real concept of library and information service, as understood today, hardly existed in the past. In this sense, the development is mainly a story of past few decades.

In the context of academic libraries, we may say that the libraries in most of the universities (about 150 now) have in general good collections, whereas the college libraries (about 5,600 colleges now) can be rated as deficient in many ways. The developments in the past one decade or so, due to changes in the staffing pattern and grants given to them, by the University Grants Commission (UGC) etc., have been quick and effective. Despite all this, the services even in the university libraries cannot be rated as adequate, and are not actually conducive to research work. Services like current awareness services (CAS) and selective dissemination of information (SDI) are not available except in some stray cases. School libraries, barring a few here and there, are extremely poor in terms of collection, services and staff. A lot needs to be done, if we are even to say that we have school libraries.

The condition of public libraries in India is still worse, both quantitatively and qualitatively. In terms of number, but for the Sikkim and Lakshadweep, all the states and union territories in the country have a State Central Library. According to the Working Group of the Planning Commission on Modernisation of Library Services and Informatics (1983), there are more than 360 district libraries (out of about 400 districts); 1,798 block libraries (out of

5,023 blocks); 41,828 village libraries (out of 5,75,937 villages) and 1,280 town libraries (out of 2,643 towns). This amounts to libraries in about 90% districts, 36% blocks, 7% villages, and about 48% towns.<sup>18</sup>

Till today, only five of the states and union territories in the country have enacted library legislation, namely Tamil Nadu, (in 1948), Andhra Pradesh (in 1960), Karnataka (in 1965), Maharashtra (in 1967), and West Bengal (in 1979). But for the last, all these have levied cess to collect funds for the growth and development of public libraries in the state. Out of the union territories only Delhi has a developed public library system, run by Delhi Public Library. In fact, the country spends Rs. 0.03 on per capita basis for public libraries and "in actual terms only 15%-20% of the total literate population has an access to public library service"<sup>19</sup> Even in the existing public libraries, we get only lending service. Can democracy play an effective role with poor literacy and hardly anything available to read?

Libraries in the areas of science and technology, social sciences, and humanities are at different stages of growth. Particularly the libraries in science & technology are well developed due to help of the government and various bodies, like CSIR, ICAR, ICMR, DST, etc. In general, all research institutes, some academic institutions, and various bodies like Botanical Survey of India, etc. have very good libraries. Special mention may be made of the National Science Library, National Medical Library, and IARI Library in Delhi, which have very good collection and offer satisfactory services to the scientific community.

Besides, in the recent past efforts have been made to develop information system, i.e. NISSAT to link various collection and services, to make these more effective.

In social sciences too, research institutions, many academic institutions, government departments, industrial enterprises and a large number of universities, offer traditional library services. Modern library and information services need to be initiated. ICSSR with its National Social Science Documentation Centre (NASSDOC) has been very active in the recent past to create library and information services in social sciences.

In humanities, there are some very good libraries and they offer good library services. The country is very rich in manuscripts



but most of these are scattered through out the country. These are not able to offer adequate services due to lack of financial support. Some of the government departments have very good collection, but mostly of government publications.

Some documentation centres in the country are doing very good job. Special mention can be made of Indian National Scientific Documentation Centre (INSDOC), National Social Science Documentation Centre (NASSDOC), Defence Scientific Information and Documentation Centre (DESIDOC), the Library & Information Services Division of the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, services by various units of ISRO in space sciences, Agricultural Research Information Centre of ICAR, the Documentation Centre of the National Institute of Health and Family Welfare, Small Enterprises National Documentation Centre (SENDOC), etc. They are generating documentation and information services.

### PROFESSION REACTS

For the past few years, library profession has expressed in numerous ways its reaction towards education policy, and the role of libraries *vis-a-vis* education policy, and emphasised to have a separate policy on library and information science. Library associations, and other institutions have organised a number of seminars at national, regional and local level and individuals have made efforts, through newspapers, magazines, and other publications, to create public awareness. As a result of all these efforts National Policy on Education (1986) has considered the problem of the unprecedented explosion of knowledge. It has included in it the following about the books and libraries<sup>20</sup>:

"The availability of books at low prices is indispensable for a people's education. Effort will be made to secure easy accessibility to books for all segments of the population. Measures will be taken to improve the quality of books, promote the reading habit and encourage creative writing. Author's interests will be protected. Good translations of foreign books into Indian languages will be supported. Special attention will be paid to the production of quality books for children, including textbooks and workbooks."

"Together with the development of books, a nation-wide movement for the improvement of existing libraries and the

establishment of new ones will be taken up. Provisions will be made in all educational institutions for library facilities and the status of librarians improved."

Not only this, the document 'National Policy on Education: Programme of Action' brought out by the Department of Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, in order to present a concrete programme of the implementation of the National Policy on Education, has specified action to be taken to improve library and information services.

For the 'Integrated Child Development Services', the 'Programme' offers, among other things, books, pictures, etc. 'Non-Formal Education' (NFE), "programme would also be linked with the schemes of public libraries...." Among the Essential facilities at the primary stage, it offers to make available dictionaries, encyclopaedias, children books, magazine, journals and newspapers for teachers and children.

In 'Higher Education', the 'Programme' has stated (in para 21 (b) and (c)) <sup>21</sup>:

21 (b) "to establish networking arrangements of selected institutions from all parts of the country by linking them together through a computer data network with terminals for each to enable sharing of information data banks, library and computation resources,...."

21(c) "to ensure access to information and source material essential for research, a network of regional libraries as a common servicing facility will be established. These libraries will be equipped with modern facilities for information storage, retrieval, reprography, etc."

For 'technical and management education', the 'Programme' observes that "Library services and their utilisation by staff and students have not been satisfactory in a large number of institutions. The facilities in these institutions require to be strengthened. Recent developments in the field of educational technology have a great potential for enriching the instructional process. The role of resource centres is, therefore, becoming pivotal both for the teacher and the taught and the establishment of learning resource centres in increasing number requires necessary attention." The 'Programme' plans to study and survey 'the position regarding



obsolescence and lack of infrastructure facilities' and the All India Council for Technical Education (which will be vested with statutory authority) will make suitable schemes for the 'modernisation and removal of obsolescence of libraries'<sup>21</sup>.

In the context of 'research and development' too, the 'Programme' observes that "poor library, inadequate information system, absence of computational and reprographic facilities are endemic to the majority of educational institutions. Research facilities are outdated. The need for modernisation and removal of obsolescence is urgent." For ensuring high quality of research too, it lays emphasis on improving library, documentation and laboratory facilities'. It has conceived UGC, AICTE, and other such bodies to 'support publication of journals' for wider dissemination of knowledge and awareness<sup>21</sup>

Thus one can infer, without any over emphasis that there is a definite problem of communication of information, availability and accessibility of information and its consequent consumption. This has become evident by the expression made in the 'Programme of Action', specially in the context of education at all levels in the country. All these inferences, coupled with the reaction and efforts of the library profession, have led to another chain of events, which in the near future may culminate into a separate National Policy on Library and Information System.

The Planning Commission set up a 'Working Group on Modernization of Library Services and Informatics' for the 7th Five Year Plan (1985-90), in 1983. The Working Group submitted its report in July, 1984 recommending an investment of Rs. 996 crores for this sector during the 7th Five Year Plan. The Working Group has gone to the extent to recommend that "Library and Information Services should be considered as independent sector like other sectors during national plan formulations". In its general recommendations on libraries and information services, the Working Group proposed to have a national policy for library and information services, saying: "In view of the fact that libraries, information centres and systems play a vital role in a country's programmes for development and national reconstruction it is essential that the Union Government formulates a National Policy for Library and Information Services in the country.

Simultaneously a document was separately prepared by the Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation (in 1984) and another by the Indian Library Association (in 1985). These two documents were policy statements on library and information services in the country<sup>22</sup> <sup>23</sup>. With these developments in the background, the Government of India, Department of Culture set up a Committee on National Policy on Library and Information System, in October, 1985 under the Chairmanship of Professor D.P. Chattopadhyaya to consider the two documents on policy (referred to above), to determine the reaction on the documents of relevant experts and institutions all over the country, to arrange public discussion on the policy statement and to prepare 'a final document for the consideration of Government.' The Committee held seminars and meetings etc. throughout the country and submitted its 'Final Report' in May, 1986, entitled 'National Policy on Library and Information System: A Presentation', to the Minister of Human Resource Development. In addition to various types of libraries, the draft policy covers other aspects *viz.* manpower development and professional status, modernisation of library and information systems, implementing agencies and financial support, etc. It has proposed the creation of a number of agencies at national and state level, as well as for different types of libraries to implement the policy and coordinate the development of libraries and information services.<sup>24</sup>

The Government has now appointed an Empowered Committee, again with Professor D P. Chattopadhyaya as Chairman, to examine financial and other implications in implementing the policy issues contained in the draft document entitled "National Policy on Library and Information System: A Presentation." The Empowered Committee has already initiated a few Task Forces to go into various aspects relating to different types of libraries<sup>25</sup>. Now, one can hope to have a policy on library and information services in the near future.

#### TASKS BEFORE US

To achieve the goals of education set forth in the National Policy on Education, taking into consideration the mass illiteracy in the country and the constitutional obligation to achieve 'free and compulsory education for all children' (though much delayed



already), to support research and development, and in general to make information available and accessible pin-pointedly and expeditiously to all who need, even in the remote corners of the country, a lot needs to be done. Draft National Policy on Library and Information System has conceived the problem well and recommended practicable solutions.

But, adoption of a final policy on library and information services in the country, formulating its programme of action and its final implementation may have to wait for the next Five-Year Plan. Before, that, library profession need not loose momentum, it has gained in the past few years. Some areas, which require our continued attention are :

- No educational institution should be established without a library.
- Efforts should be made to coordinate library activities in an area, local as well as regional, in order to facilitate maximum utilisation of scarce resources and to develop better services.
- Even large academic libraries have failed so far to offer adequate information services. They should endeavour to offer current awareness services and selective dissemination of information.
- Library and information science schools and associations have a crucial role to play, to develop manpower in sufficient quantity and of required quality. The revolution in communication and educational technology has to be assimilated in the curriculum and library and information system operations. Continuing education programmes have to be developed to update knowledge of past generations of library and information science professionals. This is essential to manage the libraries and information centres in the near future.
- Library and information scientists need to be given better working and service conditions. It is sad that in many states, the parity of pay-scales restored by the University Grants Commission in 1980, has not been given to librarians in universities and colleges. Even the Government of India has not declared its decision on Part B of Mehrotra

Committee Report, concerned with librarians and directors of physical education. Librarians and information scientists need to be considered academic staff and given pay scales and other facilities at par with teachers/academic staff.

- Each community should have a library. All must have access to free public library services. This can be achieved by enacting library legislation in each state. The Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation should take lead in this direction.

Above all, the working librarians and information scientists should think individually as well as through various platforms available to them, as to how they can help to achieve the goals of education. They must make efforts to effect greater coordination in planning library and information centre's activities, in order to achieve maximum benefit of the resources available to them. They should make, efficient and effective communication of information as their chief aim. That is how we can contribute towards attainment of the objective stated in the draft National Policy on Library and Information System, reproduced below :

“Library and Information sources are vital for all sectors of national activity. The availability of information, expeditiously and pinpointedly, supports all decision making processes at all levels. Relevant information accelerates the pace of national development. An informed citizen is an asset to a democratic system of government and the proper utilisation of information can improve the quality of life of citizens....”<sup>26</sup>



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# Index

- Academic Excellence 25, 26
- Admission tickets 3
- Administrative authorities 4
- Adult Education 131-132
- Aims of Education 7-14
- Area-consciousness 7
- Bachelor of Home Management (BHM) 21
- Basic Education 105
- Bureaucratic Structure 4
- Career-cum-House wife 70
- Career women 68-69
- Co-education 66
- Continuing education 121-22
- Current Awareness Services (CAS) 133
- Democracy 9
- Economic development 105
- Economic policies 105-106
- Education 7-14, 29-30, 34-38, 41-43, 49-52, 55-63, 65-71, 74, 77, 82-86, 88-89, 105-7, 110-13, 115, 125-136
- Education bill 114
- Education Commission 1949, 86
- Education Commission, 1964-66, 73
- Education Policy 32, 37-53, 128, 135
- Educational Reform 109
- Education system 42-43, 47-49, 56-57
- Educational services 113
- Educated women 67-70, 73
- Educational courses 19
- Educational curricula 67
- Educational Technology in Higher Education 80-81
- Environmental setting 118-119
- Exclusive house wife 68-70
- Foreign languages 21-22
- Foreign language teaching in India 93-104
- Freedom of thought 11
- Free Elections 9
- Gajendergadkar Committee 5
- Games and Sports 113
- Geo-economics 8
- Geo-politics 8
- Geo-Sentiments 7-8
- Higher Education 1-5, 9-27, 29, 32-34, 46-47, 55-56, 59, 62-63, 66-67, 85-91, 105-115, 126, 129
- House-wife-cum-career-women 68-70
- Illiteracy 108
- India's culture or education 29-30
- Kothari Commission (1964) 131
- Kothari Commission (1966) 86
- Leading centres of learning 4
- Legal Education 24
- Libraries in India 133-135
- Libraries in the National Plans 131-133
- Library and Information Services 133

- Library Legislation 134  
 Macaulay's system of education 30  
 Management of Education 125  
 Mass Education 65-66, 78  
 Mass media 11  
 Master of Home Management (MHM) 21  
 Men's education 65, 67  
 Middle level of excellence 120  
 Moral education 115  
 Multipurpose Higher Secondary System 106  
 National Board of Adult Education (1970) 132  
 National Information System for Science & Technology (NISST) 132  
 National Policy on Education 1986 37-38, 40, 53, 125-28, 135-36  
 National policy on Education Libraries 125-136  
 National Social Science Documentation Centre (NASS DOC) 134, 135  
 Nationalism 7  
 New education policy 111, 114  
 New Educational technology 82  
 New-formal education 44  
 Open University system 79-80  
 Optimum excellence 120  
 Positive discontentment 119  
 Primary Education 34, 42, 44  
 Professional and Legal Education 24  
 Puranas 30, 33  
 Public Library 130  
 Quality of education 5  
 Radhakrishnan Commission 131  
 Raja Ram Mohan Roy Library Foundation 132  
 Regionalism 7  
 Religious dogmas 7  
 Research training 4  
 Role efficacy 121, 123  
 Role efficacy of a teacher 118  
 Sacramental marriage 66  
 Satellite states 8  
 Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) 133  
 Self-appraisal 121  
 Self financing education scheme 108, 111  
 Self-regulation 122  
 Social change 10, 68  
 Socialization 122  
 Secondary Education 42, 45  
 Socio-economic system 118  
 Socio-political system 118  
 Socio-Sentiments 7, 8  
 System of education 105, 106, 115  
 Teaching Community 3  
 Teaching of Foreign Languages 21-22  
 Traditional education 20, 61  
 Unemployment 105-106, 112  
 University Autonomy 26  
 University Education 70  
 Vedas 29-36  
 Vedic education 29-36  
 White-Collar mentality 107  
 Wholistic ideology 12  
 Women Education in India 65-76  
 World Science Information System (UNISIST) 132, 134









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# THE COLLECTORS RECOLLECT

*Editors :* Mohan Mukerji, Ramesh K. Arora

Perhaps the most absorbing and challenging administrative position in India is that of a District Collector. In a district, anything that can happen, happens. The poly chromatic reality of district life has a direct bearing on the role of a Collector who has to handle a host of novel, and sometimes quaint, situations. His ingenuity and fortitude are always under test and stress.

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A must reading for all those who wish to know and “feel” the administrative reality in India.

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